PAUL TILLICH'S CONCEPTION OF THE RELATION BETWEEN PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study is to provide an exposition, interpretation, and critical evaluation of Tillich's theory of the relation between philosophy and theology. It was undertaken because of the key position which this theory occupies in Tillich's thought, and because of the general interest which it has evoked among philosophers.

In Chapter One, the philosophical background of Tillich's conception of the relation between philosophy and theology is explored. It is argued that while there are a variety of philosophical influences apparent in Tillich's theory, covering virtually the entire history of philosophy, the most immediate and dominant of these are German Idealism (particularly as represented by Hegel and Schelling), and Existentialism (particularly Heidegger and Schelling). It is observed, however, that Tillich's acceptance of existentialism is determined chiefly by his interpretation of Schelling's "positive philosophy" which he regards as the real starting point of this movement.

In Chapter Two, Tillich's conception of the relation between philosophy and theology developed during his German period is examined, particularly as it is elaborated in his book, The System of the Sciences, and his essay, "Philosophy of Religion." It is argued that Tillich's concern with the problem of the relation between philosophy and theology arises within the context of his interest in the more general problem of the relation between culture and religion. In his early period, Tillich relates philosophy and theology by attempting

to show that they are both elements of the normative science of religion: philosophy supplies religion with the "principles and categories of meaning" and theology gives religion its normative content. Tillich attempts to relate culture and religion by arguing that culture is the form of religion and religion is the content of culture.

In Chapter Three, Tillich's conceptions of "philosophy" and "theology" as found in his recent works are examined, particularly from the viewpoint of his attempt to distinguish them. Philosophy and theology are distinguished according to the cognitive attitudes they demand, the sources of their knowledge, and their contents. It is argued, however, that these distinctions are not consistently maintained, as is made apparent, for example, in his view that philosophers are, to some extent, theologians. His failure to observe his own distinction between "the structure of being" and "being-itself," I argue, also tends to obscure his attempted distinction between philosophy and theology.

In Chapter Four, the nature of the relation between philosophy and theology is considered. It is found that philosophy and theology are distinguished, in the final analysis, only by definition, and are considered by Tillich to be actually inseparable. It is argued that the presupposition of the philosophy-theology relation is Tillich's view of the relation between form and content as developed in his early philosophy of religion. I attempt to show that this interpretation clarifies many of the puzzling features of the theory and that it conforms to the structure of the completed system in his Systematic Theology.

In Chapter Five, some of the difficulties found in Tillich's

conception of the philosophy-theology relation are discussed and a general evaluation of the theory is attempted. It is argued that the theory depends on Tillich's view that philosophy contains a religious element and that this view is not adequately demonstrated. I argue further that Tillich's argument suffers from his tendency to maintain many of his basic distinctions and from his unwarranted assumption that "ultimate concern" is always concern about what is ultimate. I argue in conclusion that Tillich's interpretation of the philosophy-theology relation in terms of form and content, while illuminating, is inadequate as a general theory.

PREFACE

The purpose of this study is to provide an exposition, interpretation, and critical evaluation of Tillich's theory of the relation between philosophy and theology. While limited in scope, such a study is necessary, I believe, because of the key position which this theory occupies in Tillich's thought, and because of the general interest which it has evoked among philosophers.

In Chapter One, the philosophical background of Tillich's conception of the relation between philosophy and theology is explored. Chapter Two deals with his view of the relation between philosophy and theology as it developed in his early thought (prior to 1933) in the context of his philosophy of religion and culture. Most of the studies of Tillich's thought which consider his view of the philosophy-theology relation ignore his early works. Tillich's conception of this relation, however, cannot be adequately understood apart from his early thought; for it is in his early thought, I believe, that one finds the foundation for the conception of the philosophy-theology relation elaborated in his Systematic Theology and other works of his American period. In Chapter Three, the conceptions of philosophy and theology as found in Tillich's recent works are examined, particularly from the point of view of his attempt to distinguish them. Chapter Four deals with the nature of the relation between philosophy and theology. The attempt is made to spell out explicitly just how, in Tillich's view, philosophy and theology remain distinct and in what way they are inseparably related. In Chapter Five, some of the philosophical problems raised by Tillich's conception are discussed, and a general evaluation of his theory is attempted.

I wish to express my gratitude to the members of the Philosophy Department at Columbia University who have guided my research for this study and have given me many valuable suggestions: Professor John Herman Randall, Jr., and especially Professors Albert Hofstadter and Paul Oskar Kristeller. A special word of thanks is due to Professor Kristeller who, in addition to giving me much encouragement, also checked my translations of quotations from Tillich's German works against the original and offered many valuable suggestions. Finally, I am indebted to Professor Arne Unhjem of Wagner College who allowed me to use his unpublished translations of Tillich's essays, "Philosophy of Religion" and "Overcoming the Concept of Religion in the Philosophy of Religion." I have, however, made many changes in these, and bear sole responsibility for any translation errors in the passages which I quoted.

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CHAPTER I

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND OF TILLICH'S CONCEPTION OF THE RELATION BETWEEN PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to provide an exposition, interpretation, and critique of Tillich's conception of the relation between philosophy and theology. In it, I shall be concerned with his theory as to how these two disciplines are related, and not primarily with his answers to particular philosophical problems or with the details of his theological system. Such a study, while limited in scope, is necessary, I think, because of the importance which Tillich himself attributes to this relation; its importance is indicated by the fact that his conception of this relation forms the basis of his theological method.

In this chapter, the attempt will be made to place Tillich's efforts at relating philosophy and theology in their historical context. The effort will be made, that is, to indicate some of the factors in the philosophical situation which prompted Tillich to concern himself with this problem. Some of the major philosophical influences on his thought will also be considered, but for the most part only to the extent that they have a direct bearing on the problem of our study. A detailed examination of Tillich's philosophical background would require a lengthy book.[1] For Tillich is steeped in the history of philosophy and has been influenced by a wide variety of sources. Moreover, Tillich is not one who simply borrows ideas from other thinkers. He rarely does so without considerable reinterpretation of his own. The question of influences, moreover, becomes more important in connection with Tillich's approach to specific philosophical and theological problems. Thus, the treatment of Tillich's philosophical background in this chapter will be directed, in the first place, to a consideration of the problem which led Tillich to formulate his conception of religion and to attempt to relate philosophy and theology. The influences at work in his effort to relate philosophy and theology, primarily as he himself has elaborated them, will also be considered.

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[1] Such a detailed study has fortunately been undertaken by Günter Friedrich Sommer in regard to the influence of Schelling on Tillich.

The Historical Context of Tillich's Thought

Tillich stands in the tradition of those philosophers and theologians--among them, Augustine, Aquinas, Kant, Hegel, Schelling, and Schleiermacher--who have attempted to relate and to reconcile Christian doctrine and the secular forms of thought of their day. The aim of Tillich's life work has been to formulate an "apologetic" theology, a theology that is, which formulates the essentials of Christian doctrine in such a way that it is shown not only to be compatible with philosophy, but also to provide the very answers to the questions which philosophers are asking. As such, Tillich's attempt represents nothing new for the history of Christian theology. Since those first great

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See his: *The Significance of the Late Philosophy of Schelling for the Formation and Interpretation of the Thought of Paul Tillich* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, Inc., 1960).

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apologetic achievements of the Greek Fathers and Augustine, which provided the inspiration for all subsequent apologetic attempts, similar efforts have been made time and time again. Attempts at reconciling philosophy and theology, moreover, have not been confined to theologians, but have also been made by philosophers themselves. The most notable effort from the philosophical side is undoubtedly that of Hegel and his followers. Tillich, of course, stands by his own profession among the theologians; but like all great apologetic theologians, Tillich's interest in philosophy and his use of it in theology is not merely a matter of pragmatic strategy, but stems from a deep involvement in philosophy itself.[1] Tillich, like all significant apologists, is what he is primarily because of his own inner need to reconcile philosophy and theology.

That Tillich should have concerned himself with the problem of the relation between philosophy and theology is not at all surprising when one considers his background. His father was a Lutheran clergyman who possessed, so Tillich informs us, a strong sense of duty, sin, and authority,[2] and who was a "completely convinced and, in the presence of doubt, angry supporter of the conservative Lutheran point of view."[3] Nevertheless, as a classical orthodox theologian, his father "loved and used philosophy, convinced that there can be no conflict

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[1] Tillich has described his position as being "on the boundary" between philosophy and theology, and between religion and culture. See his book: The Interpretation of History (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), pp. 30-41, 49-54.

[2] *Ibid*., pp. 3-4.

[3] "Autobiographical Reflections," Kegley and Bretall, eds., The Theology of Paul Tillich (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961 edition), p. 8.

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between a true philosophy and revealed truth."[1] Tillich tells us that the long philosophical discussions which he had with his father were among the happiest occasions of his early home life.[2] Tillich received a good classical education at a humanistic Gymnasium, first in Königsberg, and later in Old Berlin. The main subjects studied were Greek and Latin, and Tillich acquired a special fondness for the Greek language and Greek philosophy. He experienced, however, a tension between classical antiquity to which he devoted his studies and the Christian tradition which he encountered in his home and church. This tension drove him to try to overcome the conflict in a constructive way.[3] He began to study philosophy on his own, and acquired a basic knowledge of Kant, Fichte, Schleiermacher, Hegel, and Schelling by the time he entered the university.[4] He studied theology at Berlin, Tübingen, and Halle, and philosophy in Breslau. He received the Doctor of Philosophy degree from Breslau in 1911 and the degree of Licentiat of Theology from Halle in 1912. It is hardly surprising, therefore, when one considers his background, that Tillich came to conceive of his role as a mediator between philosophy and theology.

In spite of the fact that he was naturally suited for the task, however, it is in the context of the religious-philosophical problem of his day that his attempt to relate philosophy and theology must be understood. For apologists are not born in a vacuum, but in concrete situations of religious-philosophical conflict. The problem, as Tillich sees it, is the loss of the immediate religious awareness of

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[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid., pp. 9-10.

[4] Ibid., p. 10.

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God conceived as the unconditioned,[1] the subsequent attempts to prove God's existence and their failure, and the crisis which developed in theology and the philosophy of religion as a result of the philosophical demise of rational theology. This problem requires some elaboration so that the context of Tillich's work may be properly understood.

The problem of the relation between philosophy and theology, Tillich believes, is the problem of the two absolutes: the religious absolute, God, and the philosophical absolute, Being.[2] There cannot be, however, two absolutes; a relation must be found between them. The solution to the problem of their relation, Tillich believes, is found in the meaning of the ontological argument, although not in its various formulations. This solution was first given by Augustine in his identification of God and _veritas_.[3] God is truth, and truth is presupposed in every philosophical argument. As Tillich interprets Augustine's solution: "The question of the two Ultimates is solved in such a way that the religious Ultimate is presupposed in every philosophical question, including the question of God. _God is the presup-_

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[1] The "unconditioned," a term used by Tillich primarily in his early works, is used interchangeably with "God." The term "unconditioned" has the advantage, Tillich believes, of avoiding the connotation that the divine is an existing being. Tillich's sources for this term are probably Kant and Schelling. Schelling does, of course, sometimes speak of God as existing. Tillich does not, mainly because he takes "existence" to mean "finite being in space and time," and because he considers existence to be the state of the Fall. He thus regards God as preceding the essence-existence distinction.

[2] Tillich's view that "Being" is the philosophical absolute would not, of course, be accepted by all philosophers, and may well reflect the influence of Heidegger. The importance of Being as a philosophical concept, however, goes back to Greek philosophy.

[3] The emphasis on Truth in God is significant, but in Augustine _veritas_ is but one of many attributes of God.

position of the question of God: This is the ontological solution of the problem of the philosophy of religion. God can never be reached if he is the object of a question, and not its basis."[1]

The ontological solution, according to Tillich, was maintained by the Franciscan school of the thirteenth century, and in some measure by German Idealism.[2] It is dissolved, however, in all philosophies and theologies which begin with a cosmological approach to the question of God. Moreover, if the ontological approach is viewed as a proof for the existence of a being, God, the principle of the ontological awareness of the unconditioned[3] is lost. The inevitable result is the overthrow of the argument, as happens in Hume and Kant. With the loss of the ontological awareness of the unconditioned, God becomes a being whose existence must be demonstrated. But the existence of God cannot be derived from the existence of the world or from a concept in the human mind. Any being whose existence could be so demonstrated could not be God.[4] Tillich, therefore, accepts Kant's critique of the ontological and cosmological arguments insofar as they attempt to prove the existence of such a being.

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[1] "The Two Types of Philosophy of Religion," R.C. Kimball, ed., Theology of Culture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 12-13. (This essay appeared originally in 1946.)

[2] Ibid., pp. 13, 20-21.

[3] Tillich is not at all clear about what he means by "ontological awareness of the unconditioned." He claims that he is using "awareness" in as neutral as possible a way, avoiding the connotations of "intuition," "experience," and "knowledge." He does not, however, say what it is. The most he says is that this awareness may be called "existential;" but that leaves the matter as foggy as at the start. (Ibid., pp. 23-24.)

[4] See Tillich's "Die Ueberwindung des Religionsbegriffs in der Religionsphilosophie," Renate Albrecht, ed., Frühe Haupwerke (Gesammelte Werke, I; Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1959), pp. 371-372. (This article originally appeared in 1922; it will subsequently be cited as "Overcoming the Concept of Religion.")

The loss of the immediate unity of consciousness with the unconditioned and the subsequent destruction of rational theology based on proofs for God's existence resulted, in Tillich's view, in a misconception of the nature of religion. This will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter where Tillich's philosophy of religion is examined. For the present, however, this misunderstanding must be mentioned in order to place Tillich's work in its proper context. Once the immediate awareness of the unconditioned is lost, religion sinks back into the human self.[1] Thus, in Kant and his followers the attempt was made to locate religion in one of the functions of the human spirit.[2] Kant, Fichte, the early Schelling, and Ritschl reduced religion to the moral function of the human spirit. Hegel made religion a form of knowledge, thus reducing it to man's cognitive function. Religion, like philosophy, is an interpretation and explanation of the universe, but religion employs symbols and is hence subordinated to the pure knowledge of philosophy which uses only concepts. Schleiermacher, on the other hand, reduced religion to man's aesthetic function.[3]

Tillich's conception of religion, elaborated in his early works[4] and presupposed in his later attempt to relate philosophy and theology,

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[1] Ibid., p. 373. [2] Ibid., pp. 369-370.

[3] Sommer, op. cit., p. 94. See also: J.H. Randall, Jr., The Career of Philosophy, II (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), pp. 332-353. Randall provides an interesting and detailed account of these three attempts to define the nature and function of religion.

[4] For a discussion of Tillich's early philosophy of religion, see Chapter II, below.

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was formed in protest against the attempt to reduce religion to a function of the human spirit. Moreover, Tillich has never ceased to protest against all such attempts. In one of his more recent books, he states emphatically: "Religion is not a special function of the human spirit!"[1] He then recites, as he had done much earlier,[2] the wanderings of religion to the various functions of the human spirit in quest of a home.

Tillich's answer to the problem of religion lies in his reinterpretation and reaffirmation of the ontological type of philosophy of religion, and in his insistence that religion cannot be reduced to a single function of the human spirit, but must be conceived as the direction of the spirit in all of its functions toward the unconditioned. Tillich's affirmation of the ontological type of philosophy involves his acceptance of the Kantian critique of the ontological argument as a proof for God's existence, and his attempt to build upon that argument by interpreting it as the principle that the unconditioned is presupposed in every question, including the question of God. God is the presupposition of the question of God; his reality cannot be the object of a question because it is presupposed in the very asking of the question.[3] This view is reiterated again and again in Tillich's early works. He says, for example, "God is either the beginning or he is nothing,"[4] and again: "The Absolute is either the beginning or it can never be reached; a construction of the concept of God which proceeds from the relative, never transcends the relative unless it annihilates the relative."[1]

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[1] Theology of Culture, p. 6.

[2] "Overcoming the Concept of Religion," pp. 369-370. The passage referred to is quoted in Chapter II, below.

[3] "The Two Types of Philosophy of Religion," pp. 13-26.

[4] "Overcoming the Concept of Religion," p. 380.

Tillich is conscious of the fact, however, that the ontological approach to philosophy of religion "is possible only where consciousness stands in immediate unity with the unconditioned."[2] The attempt to prove God's existence is a sure indication that such an immediate unity has been lost. Tillich's efforts in the philosophy of religion are directed, therefore, to the goal of leading contemporary culture to a new "theonomy," a spiritual situation in which the unconditioned is comprehended in everything conditioned. Tillich believes that everyone is essentially related to the unconditioned and has, potentially at least, this immediate awareness. In certain spiritual situations such as the present one, however, this immediate awareness becomes dim in man's consciousness. The effort must hence be made to reorient human consciousness to the unconditioned. Tillich's conception of theonomy is elaborated in the works of his German period and is more pronounced in these than in some of his later works; but it never loses its prominent place in his thinking, and, as will become evident during the course of this study, underlies all of his attempts to relate philosophy and theology.

In both his protest against the attempt to make religion a single function of the human spirit and the development of his own conception of religion, Tillich was influenced primarily by the later

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[1] *Der Begriff des Uebernatürlichen* (Königsberg: H. Madrasch, 1915), p. 54.

[2] "Overcoming the Concept of Religion," p. 371.

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philosophy of Schelling. Tillich sees in Schelling the first post-Kantian protest against the effort to reduce religion to a function of the human spirit.[1] Schelling believes that the pure substance of human consciousness posits God by its very nature,[2] a view reflected in Tillich's notion that substantially there is no possible atheism.[3] Schelling views religion not as a particular activity of reason beside many others, but as the essential identity of reason with itself prior to its division into the various functions.[4] Tillich's attempt to build upon the ontological argument while at the same time accepting Kant's refutation of its validity, moreover, also indicates his dependence on Schelling's philosophy. For Schelling made the same attempt in his Munich lectures of 1827[5] and again in his Berlin lectures of 1841-1842.[6]

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[1] Sommer, op. cit., p. 100.

[2] Ibid., pp. 103-105. Sommer's reference is to Schelling's Philosophie der Mythologie, in Manfred Schröter's edition of Schellings Werke, Sechster Hauptband (Munich, 1959), p. 375.

[3] The Protestant Era, J.L. Adams, trans. (Abridged Edition. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. xi.

[4] Sommer, op. cit., pp. 101-102.

[5] Ibid., pp. 44-45. Schelling came to the conclusion, Sommer relates, that the problem of the ontological argument "cannot be solved so long as an immediate awareness of the reality of God cannot be presupposed."

[6] See, for example, the first of these lectures in J.T. Wilde and W. Kimmel, eds. and trans., The Search for Being (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1962), pp. 32-48. Here Schelling states: "But little as the ontological argument . . . could prove the existence of God, it would, nevertheless, properly understood, have had to lead to the beginning of positive philosophy. . . . I do not start in positive philosophy from the concept of God, as former metaphysics and ontological arguments as well attempted to do, but I must drop the concept of God in order to start out from the merely existing, in which nothing is considered but just the existing itself to see whether with this as a

While Tillich's conception of religion was decisively influenced by Schelling, his philosophical and theological work in general and his conception of the relation between philosophy and theology in particular reflects the influence of a wide variety of sources. In defending his conception of philosophy, Tillich often appeals to the "classical tradition from Parmenides to Hegel."[1] Tillich's work reflects the influence of almost all of the great philosophers in this tradition, beginning with the Pre-Socratics with whom the concept of "being" arose.[2] From Plato, Tillich takes the distinction between the world of essences and the world in which we live and the notion that existence in the world of changing reality represents a Fall of the soul.[3] His conception of "ecstasy," developed in his doctrine of revelation, is borrowed from Plotinus.[4] The conception of the "*Logos*," which originates with the Stoics[5] and is later employed by the Greek Apologists and Augustine, plays a fundamental role in Tillich's conception of the relation between philosophy and theology. Tillich's notion that philosophy is primarily "critical" is taken from Kant, as is his view that the human mind is limited to the categories of ex-

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starting point, it is possible to reach the godhead. Thus I cannot actually prove the existence of God, but instead I have gained the concept of that existing before all potency and therefore existing unquestionably. I call it the unquestionably existing" (pp. 32-33).

[1] *Systematic Theology*, I (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 72. (Hereafter, this work will be cited as *S.T.* I.)

[2] "Philosophical Background of my Theology," p. 1; unpublished lecture delivered at St. Paul's University, Tokyo, May 12, 1960. (A copy of this lecture may be found in the Union Seminary Library, New York City.)

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 2. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 3. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

perience and cannot know the infinite in its own power.[1] Theologically, Tillich shares Luther's emphasis on "justification by faith" and "salvation by grace alone," although these are radically reinterpreted, partially due to the influence of Tillich's theological teacher, Martin Kaehler.[2] Kaehler also impressed upon Tillich the notion that "mediation" is the essential task of theology.[3]

The most immediate sources of influence upon Tillich's conception of the relation between philosophy and theology, however, are to be found in German Idealism--particularly as represented in Hegel and Schelling--and in existentialism considered as a protest against this idealism (Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and especially the later Schelling[4]). A brief consideration of these sources will now be undertaken, primarily, but not exclusively, with reference to some of the many statements which Tillich makes concerning his philosophical background.

Tillich's Debt to German Idealism

While Tillich has been influenced by existentialism and frequently uses existentialist language, it should not be forgotten that Tillich's roots are in Idealism. He states: "I nurtured German Idealism, and I do not believe that I can ever unlearn what I learned there."[4] The extent to which he absorbed the spirit of Idealism is indicated by his early hope that a relation between philosophy and theology could be achieved on its basis. Speaking of his days as a theological student prior to 1910, he mentions his discovery of Kierkegaard. At that time, he says, Kierkegaard had only a limited impact upon him and his fellow students; "For the spirit of the nineteenth century still prevailed, and we hoped that the great synthesis between Christianity and humanism could be achieved with the tools of German classical philosophy."[1] The First World War represented for Tillich the collapse of idealism and its synthesis of philosophy and theology. A new way would have to be found to relate the two,[2] a task to which Tillich devoted himself with persistent energy.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 5. [2] *The Protestant Era*, pp. x-xii.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. ix.

[4] Schelling is not, of course, ordinarily considered an existentialist, and certainly did not use the term himself. Tillich, however, sees in Schelling's later "positive" philosophy the beginning of existentialism. In referring to Schelling as an existentialist, therefore, I am employing Tillich's designation.

[5] *Interpretation of History*, p. 60.

Tillich's recognition of the collapse of German Idealism should not be construed, however, as an indication that its presuppositions ceased to occupy an important role in his thinking. For the influence of idealism[3] is apparent in all of his works, and is often acknowledged by him openly. Thus, his conception of the identity between thought and being, or the correspondence between objective and subjective reason, which is the key notion in his conception of philosophy, represents the permanent influence of Idealism on his thought. He says, for example:

> The point of procedure of every analysis of experience and every concept of a system of reality must be the point where subject and object are at one and the same place. From there, I came to understand the idealistic principle of identity--not in the sense of metaphysical speculation, but in the sense of an analysis of the

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[1] "Autobiographical Reflections," op. cit., p. 11.

[2] Interpretation of History, p. 35.

[3] The term "idealism" means, of course, many things. For Tillich, it means primarily the principle of identity as it appears in Schelling and Hegel.

> final elements implied in every knowledge. Up to now no criticism of idealism has convinced me of the inadmissibility of this procedure. . . . Thus I have remained an idealist as far as the method of procedure is concerned in a theory of knowledge. I am an idealist if idealism means the assertion of the identity of thinking and being as the principle of truth.[1]

Again, Tillich says: "It cannot be denied that a correspondence exists between the human spirit and reality, which is probably best expressed in the concept of 'Meaning,' and which led Hegel to talk of the unity of the objective with the subjective spirit in an absolute spirit. Whenever idealism seeks to elaborate the categories which give meaning in the different realms, it thereby fulfills the task, fulfillment of which alone justifies the existence of a philosophy."[2] And when Tillich speaks of "ontological" as opposed to "technical" reason in relation to the classical tradition of philosophy from Parmenides to Hegel, he states: "The denial of reason in the classical sense is antihuman because it is antidivine."[3]

Moreover, Tillich's tendency to speak about "reality as a whole" and his apparent view that all knowledge is systematic knowledge reflect further his lasting affection for idealism. No thing, he claims, can be isolated from all other things; and the deeper the philosopher penetrates beneath surface appearances into more real levels, the less possible it is to consider things "in separation from each other and from the whole of reality."[4] In fact, the philosopher does not reach the "really real" until he has penetrated beneath the levels of personal existence where men appear as isolated individuals to "the living substance in which all living beings participate."[1] The same view, that everything is related, is evident in his attempt to develop a system of all the sciences[2] and a theological system. Of his attempt to write a *Systematic Theology*, he says: "It has always been impossible for me to think theologically in any other than a systematic way. The smallest problem, if taken seriously and radically, drove me to all other problems and to the anticipation of *a whole in which they could find their solution*."[3]

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[1] Interpretation of History, p. 60. [2] Ibid., p. 61.

[3] S.T. I, p. 72. This remark clearly depends on Hegel. See Randall, op. cit., p. 341.

[4] Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1955), pp. 12-13. (Hereafter, this work will be cited as Biblical Religion.)

But, in spite of the continuing influence of idealism on his thinking, Tillich came to recognize that a relation between philosophy and theology could not be effected on its terms alone. He says that in his early thought (prior to the First World War) he thought he had found the unity of philosophy and theology in Schelling's "founding of a Christian philosophy of existence in contrast to Hegel's humanistic philosophy of essence and in his interpretation of history as the History of Salvation."[4] And he adds that he considers Schelling to be the most theonomous of all the idealistic philosophers. He concludes, however:

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[1] *Ibid*., p. 13.

[2] See his, *Das System der Wissenschaften* (in *Frühe Hauptwerke*, pp. 111-293.) which appeared originally in 1923. In his introduction, he states: "Erkannt ist, was als notwendiges Glied einem Zusammenhang eingeordnet ist. Das Einzelne in seiner Vereinzelung ist kein Gegenstand der Erkenntnis. . . . Das gilt für jeden Gegenstand und für jede Wissenschaft. . . ." (p. 113) Certain aspects of Tillich's system of the sciences are discussed in Chapter II, below.

[3] *S.T.* I, p. vii (Italics mine).

[4] *Interpretation of History*, p. 35.

> But to be sure, not even Schelling was able to bring about a unity of theology and philosophy. The World War in my own experience was the catastrophe of idealistic thinking in general. Even Schelling's philosophy was drawn into this catastrophe. The chasm, which without doubt, Schelling had seen, but soon had covered up again, opened itself. If a reunion of theology and philosophy should again become possible, it could be achieved only in such a way as would do justice to this experience of the abyss of our existence. Thus, my philosophy of religion came into existence as an attempt to satisfy this demand.[1]

Tillich and the Existentialist Protest

In his recognition of the collapse of German Idealism, Tillich was influenced by the protest of existentialism against idealism, or essentialism, as he frequently terms it. In his later works especially, Tillich often uses existentialist terminology, frequently speaking of anxiety, despair, estrangement, and meaninglessness. He also speaks of the philosopher's ontological task as "existential analysis" and insists that the theologian must attempt to answer the questions implied in the existential situation. It is important to note, however, that Tillich locates the beginning of the existentialist protest in Schelling.[2] His acceptance of this protest, moreover, has never implied for him the complete rejection of idealism. His acceptance of existentialist philosophy is, therefore, limited; and to refer to him as an "existentialist" is misleading unless properly qualified.

Tillich's approach to existentialism can, perhaps, be made most clear by considering the meaning he attaches to the terms "essentialism" and "existentialism." He states: "By essentialism, I understand a philosophy which is directed to the essence of things, their 'what'--Platonically speaking, to their eidos, their eternal Form--or in Christian terms, to their created nature."[1] He goes on to say that Hegel's system is the most complete example of essentialism. Hegel's system is impure, however, because it takes history, which belongs to existence, into the system of essences.[2] Concerning existentialism, he says: "By existentialism I mean a philosophy which is directed to the existence of things, insofar as they stand in contradiction to their essence--in Platonic and Christian terminology, to things in their fall from their true nature."[3] Here it is evident that Tillich's understanding of existentialism has largely been determined by Schelling, and that his conception of the "Fall" in particular, has been influenced by Schelling. For, following his definition of existentialism, he adds in the same paragraph: "Where the Fall is, there the doors are open for a new appreciation of Schelling."[4] It is also clear from what has been said above that Tillich's rejection of Hegel is based primarily on the latter's attempt to incorporate history into the system of essences, and his subsequent failure (as Tillich believes with Schelling) to recognize that existence (and thus also man's thinking) contradicts as well as reflects essence.[5]

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[1] _Ibid._, pp. 35-36.

[2] "Schelling und die Anfänge des existentialistischen Protestes," in Renate Albrecht, ed., _Philosophie und Schicksal_ (Gesammelte Werke, IV; Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1961). pp. 133-144. (This article was first printed in 1955.) See also, "Existential Philosophy: Its Historical Meaning," _Theology of Culture_, pp. 76-111; originally appeared in 1944.

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[1] Ibid., p. 134. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid., pp. 134-135.

[4] Ibid., p. 135.

[5] Interpretation of History, p. 61: "Only Schelling in his second period was conscious of the questionableness of the systems of the philosophy of essence. He recognized that reality is not only the appearance of essence, but also the contradiction of it and . . . that our thinking is a part of our existence and shares the fate that human existence contradicts its true nature."

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It is important to note, however, that Tillich views the existentialist revolt against Hegel's essentialism as having been accomplished with the help of existentialist elements in Hegel's thought.[1] Primary among these existentialist elements, Tillich believes, is Hegel's consciousness "of the ontology of nonbeing. Negation is the dynamic power of his system, driving the absolute idea (the essential realm) toward existence and driving existence back toward the absolute idea. . . . Hegel knows of the mystery and anxiety of nonbeing; but he takes it into the self-affirmation of being."[2] The revolt against Hegel's essentialism was led by the "positive philosophy" of the later Schelling, who termed essentialism "negative philosophy." Negative philosophy, for Schelling, abstracts from real existence, while positive philosophy is related to the individual within his historical situation.[3] Tillich's relationship to existentialism, therefore, appears to be determined primarily by his reading of the late philosophy of Schelling.

This is not to say, however, that Schelling is the only "existentialist" influence on Tillich's thought. Tillich's writings reflect a wide acquaintance not only with existentialist philosophy, but with the literature of existentialism generally. Tillich specifically states, moreover, that it was the appearance of existential philosophy in Germany in 1925 which influenced him to "a new understanding of the relation between philosophy and theology."[4] It was in 1925 that Heideg-

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[1] _The Courage To Be_ (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), p. 135.

[2] _Ibid_., p. 134.

[3] _Ibid_., p. 135.

[4] _Interpretation of History_, p. 39.

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ger was lecturing in Marburg, as was Tillich, and the new understanding of the philosophy-theology relation to which Tillich refers is that which eventually culminated in his "method of correlation." What influenced Tillich, however, was not so much the answers of existentialism, but its penetrating analysis of the existential situation. Speaking of Heidegger's philosophy, Tillich says: "To be sure, it is not a philosophy which includes the theological answer and explains it philosophically. Such an undertaking would be idealism and the opposite of the philosophy of existence. However, the philosophy of existence asks the question in a new and radical manner, the answer to which is given in theology for faith."[1] Elsewhere, speaking again of his encounter with Heidegger in 1925, he states: "It took years before I became fully aware of the impact of this encounter on my own thinking. I resisted, I tried to learn, I accepted the new way of thinking more than the answers it gave."[2] Tillich's account of the relation between Heidegger's existentialism and his own thinking appears, for the most part, to be correct. For while the influence of Heidegger is apparent in many of Tillich's works, particularly in those of his American period, this influence is much more pronounced in the terminology he employs in his ontological analysis of the structure of being and in his elaboration of the questions implied in human existence than it is in the theological answers he gives to these questions. Thus, for example, in his recent works philosophy is defined as ontology, as asking the question of being. Tillich does not use this terminology in his works before 1930, and hence it is probable

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[1] Ibid., p. 40.

[2] "Autobiographical Reflections," op. cit., p. 14.

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that his more recent use of them depends on Heidegger. Tillich's belief that the ontological description of the structure of being must begin with man, and his emphasis on the finite character of the elements and categories of the structure of being also reflects a Heideggerian influence. Even Tillich's religious concept "ultimate concern" may be viewed as at least partially determined by Heidegger's concept "*Sorge*,"[1] although the two notions are not identical. These and other similarities between Tillich and Heidegger will be observed during the course of the exposition of Tillich's conception of philosophy in the third chapter of this study.

It is noteworthy, moreover, that Tillich says that he was prepared to accept existentialist philosophy by his intimate acquaintance with the philosophy of the later Schelling, in addition to his knowledge of Kierkegaard and the philosophers of life.[2] One may wonder, therefore, whether Tillich's interpretation of more recent existentialism has not also been influenced in some degree by his interpretation of Schelling. Tillich attempts to unite essentialism and existentialism in much the same way in which he considers Schelling to have combined negative and positive philosophy. He has always insisted, moreover, that existentialism by itself is inadequate both for philosophy and theology. He says, for example: "I have never been an existentialist in the sense that Kierkegaard or Heidegger is an existen-

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[1] For a brief but clear discussion of Heidegger's conception of *Sorge*, see Thomas Langan, *The Meaning of Heidegger* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), pp. 28-31.

[2] *Interpretation of History*, p. 39. See also, Sommer, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-48. Sommer suggests that the measure in which Tillich has been influenced by the philosophy of life, Kierkegaard, and Heidegger may well be largely determined by the extent to which all of these were influenced by Schelling.

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tialist. In regard to every meaningful proposition, the existentialist lives from his opposite, the essentialist. In the past few years this insight has gained in strength; it could not be otherwise if one tries to build a theological system. . . . For this reason my present inquiries are predominantly essentialist."[1]

In connection with the influence of Kierkegaard on Tillich, Kenneth Hamilton has argued that while Tillich often speaks in praise of Kierkegaard, he rarely does so without transforming considerably the intended meaning of the latter.[2] He cites, for example, Tillich's first formal criterion of theology which states that theology deals only with what concerns us ultimately, and his attempt to connect his category of "ultimate concern" with Kierkegaard's notion of "infinite passion and interest."[3] Hamilton observes that while "ultimate concern" and "infinite interest" may appear synonymous, their respective contexts are quite different. "Tillich's statement is a general one, establishing a universal class, that of the theological proposition. Kierkegaard's is particular, or at least more particular."[4] Hamilton goes on to point out that the content of our ultimate concern, as elaborated in Tillich's second criterion, is "that which determines our being or not-being."[5] Hamilton adds:

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[1] "On the Boundary Line," Christian Century (December 7, 1960), p. 1437. See also, "Relation of Metaphysics and Theology," Review of Metaphysics, X (September, 1956), p. 63.

[2] The System and the Gospel: A Critique of Paul Tillich (London: SCM Press LTD, 1963), Chapter II: "Anti-Kierkegaard," pp. 37-53.

[3] Ibid., p. 42. See also, S.T. I, p. 12.

[4] Ibid., pp. 42-43.

[5] Ibid., p. 43. See also, S.T. I, p. 14.

> . . . the second criterion has left behind everything which Kierkegaard stands for. This analysis of ultimate concern which has been brought in so silently shares no common ground with an "infinite, personal, passionate interest in one's eternal happiness." For Kierkegaard an infinite interest arises because the individual stands confronted with the claims of Christianity and has to make his personal decision in the face of this claim. . . . By formalizing Kierkegaard's thesis that the individual can be infinitely concerned about his eternal happiness, Tillich gets rid of the individual and his happiness.[1]

In concluding this chapter, I wish to make a few general observations about the attempt of Schelling and Tillich to combine essentialism and existentialism (or negative and positive philosophy, in Schelling's terms) in relation to Tillich's conception of the relation between philosophy and theology. Both Schelling and Tillich believe that essentialism or "negative philosophy" and existentialism or "positive philosophy" must be combined. Essentialism by itself cannot do justice to or account for existence. Essentialism, for both, raises the ultimate question, "Why is there something rather than nothing?"[2] but cannot answer that question. It is interesting, however, that while Tillich insists that philosophy without an existential element is devoid of content, to the extent that philosophy _does_ contain such an existential or positive element, it is, in his view, _theology_ rather than philosophy.[3] One of the paradoxes in Tillich's conception of the philosophy-theology relation, that is, is that on the one hand he attempts to unite essentialism and existen-

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[1] _Ibid_., pp. 44-45.

[2] _Biblical Religion_, p. 6; Schelling, _The Ages of the World_, F. de Wolfe Bolman, Jr., editor and translator (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), editor's "Introduction," p. 33.

[3] _S.T._ I, p. 25.

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tialism within philosophy, and on the other hand uses these same concepts to distinguish philosophy from theology; and finally, he uses the existential element, which he has labored to incorporate into philosophy, as the basis for his argument that philosophy and theology are ultimately inseparable because philosophy contains an existential (i.e. theological) element.

Another interesting comparison between Schelling and Tillich is that while the former maintains that positive philosophy cannot simply be deduced from negative philosophy,[1] Tillich claims that theological answers cannot be derived from existential questions.[2] As Bolman has observed, however, "theology and philosophy were one and not two for the later Schelling. Begin where one will in analysis, the final outcome must be a unity which comprehends natural and historical existence in ultimately transcendent, that is, religious terms."[3] Bolman's account enables one to see how close Tillich is to Schelling. It is interesting, however, that Tillich criticizes Schelling for failing to distinguish philosophy and theology, that is, for deriving existential answers from existential analysis. Speaking of the impossibility of this, Tillich states:

> Schelling attempted it, and created a philosophical theology which was neither genuine theology nor genuine philosophy. It is the task of the theologian to answer the questions of human existence and its conflicts with the essentially human. But he can do that only on the basis of revelation, revelation of the power of being which overcomes the conflict of essence and existence, and which must be encountered in history. Schelling knew that; but he was too much an heir of the idealistic tradition to draw the consequences.[4]

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[1] Bolman, op. cit., pp. 73-74.

[2] S.T. II, pp. 15-15. [3] Op. cit., p. 33.

[4] "Schelling und die Anfänge des existentialistischen Protestes," op. cit., p. 144.

Tillich's criticism of Schelling is illuminating because it indicates the extent to which he considers himself to have transcended the idealistic tradition. Yet, at least part of his criticism of Schelling, some critics might be inclined to argue, could well be applied to Tillich himself.

I

CHAPTER II

THE RELATION BETWEEN RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY, AND THEOLOGY IN TILLICH'S GERMAN PERIOD

The Framework of the Problem

In order to understand the problem of the relation between philosophy and theology in the context in which it arises in Tillich's thought, it is important to grasp what it is that this problem signifies for him. One must try to understand, that is, what kind of a relationship he is looking for, and why he is interested in finding one; for that there should be any significant relationship between the two is not obvious. The framework in which this problem arises for Tillich, therefore, must now be explored.

The most general concern that has occupied Tillich's attention over the entire span of his career is the problem of the nature of religion and its relation to culture. In his Theology of Culture he writes: "In spite of the fact that during most of my adult life I have been a teacher of Systematic Theology, the problem of religion and culture has always been in the center of my interest."[1] As one concerned with both religion and culture, Tillich has always been very sensitive to the many conflicts between the two. He has been con-

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[1] Op. cit., p. v.

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cerned, therefore, to bring about the unity of religion and culture, the alternative to which he sees as a "divided consciousness," unless one is content merely to deny the one or the other. Such a way out, however, has never been acceptable to Tillich who is thoroughly convinced of the worth of both of these areas. Thus, the conflicts between religion and culture must be reconciled; but they must be reconciled in such a way that the valid claims of both are recognized.

Once the centrality of the problem of the relation between religion and culture in Tillich's thought has been appreciated, it should be evident that the question of the relation between philosophy and theology is one aspect of this more general problem. The philosophy-theology relation, however, is a crucial aspect of the problem, and one to which Tillich has devoted considerable attention. This is so, I think, for primarily two reasons. First, it is in these two fields that Tillich has been professionally involved, having held professorships in both philosophy and theology. It is, moreover, abundantly clear that he has always considered himself both a philosopher and a theologian.[1] But a second reason is that theology and philosophy, respectively, may be taken as appropriate symbols of the more general terms, religion and culture--theology in its traditional function as authoritative arbiter of what is true and false in religion, and philosophy in its classical role as the queen of the sciences. Regardless of the reasons, however, it is in the context of his general

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[1] During the course of a television interview, Tillich was asked what he would have been had he not been a theologian. His answer, in part, was "My first answer is that I would be what I am anyhow, a philosopher. . . ." Cited by Kenneth Hamilton, _op_. _cit_., p. 60.

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concern with religion and culture that Tillich raises the question of the relationship between philosophy and theology: and it is this context which gives the problem its seriousness and raises it above the level of a merely abstract, intellectual problem.

The approach to the problem of the relation between philosophy and theology is made, in the course of Tillich's own development, by way of the concept "religion." He does not begin with the question as to how theological concepts and statements can be philosophically justified, but with the question as to what religion is and how philosophy should attempt to deal with it.

A conflict arises because both philosophy and theology make absolute, but often conflicting, claims about religion. Theology, considering its own basis in divine revelation, sees itself as possessing the power and authority to distinguish the true from the false, the valid from the invalid in the domain of religion. But religion makes a claim of truth for itself, and inasmuch as there are conflicting religions and theologies all of which cannot be equally true, it would seem that a rational judgment from an outside source is required. Philosophy, which is based on reason alone, appears to be the objective outside authority which is needed. Moreover, religion is clearly a cultural phenomenon, and as such, the evaluation of it must surely lie within the province [illegible] philosophy. There is thus a conflict between philosophy and theology over the question of which of the two has authority in the religious realm. Religion itself resists and must resist the attempts of philosophy to reduce it to general concepts. As Tillich puts it:

> In religion philosophy encounters an object that resists the at-

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> tempt to make it an object of philosophy. The stronger, more primary, and purer a religion is, the more emphatically it demands to be exempted from the efforts to reduce it to general concepts. Concepts such as "revelation" and "redemption" are clearly antithetical to the concept of religion. . . . "Revelation" speaks of divine activity, "religion" refers to human actions. . . . "Religion" refers to culture, while "revelation" speaks of what lies beyond culture. For this reason religion senses an attack upon its innermost nature when it is called "religion." For this reason religion conceals itself for the philosophy of religion and reveals itself at the most only for theology. . . . Thus, in regard to religion the philosophy of religion is in the strange position that it must either disintegrate what it seeks to understand or else suspend itself. If it pays no attention to the revelatory claim, the philosophy of religion misses its object and fails to speak of genuine religion. If it recognizes the revelatory claim, the philosophy of religion becomes theology.[1]

A way out of this dilemma, often attempted, is to establish a boundary between the claims of revelation and the claims of philosophy, so that each can operate within a given sphere without intervention from the other. The area of genuine religion (revelation) is marked "no trespassing" for the philosopher. But such an attempt, Tillich believes, must necessarily fail.

> If there is one object from which philosophy is in principle excluded, then the right of philosophy in regard to every object becomes questionable. For philosophy would then be unable by itself to draw the line between this closed object--that is, religion--and other spheres. It could even be possible that revelation might lay claim to all spheres, and philosophy would have no weapon with which to defend itself against this claim. If philosophy surrenders at one point, it surrenders completely.[2]

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[1] "Religionsphilosophie," Frühe Hauptwerke, p. 297. This essay appeared originally in 1925. (From now on, this essay will be referred to as "Philosophy of Religion," with page numbers referring to Frühe Hauptwerke.)

In the present context, "religion" in quotation marks and the expression "concept of religion" without quotation marks, refer to religion as a cultural phenomenon, that is, religion as conceived by the philosophy of religion; the expression, "religion" without quotation marks, refers to genuine or revelatory religion.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 298.

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Moreover, revelation does in fact make a claim on all spheres. Revelation cannot allow itself to become one alongside many other spheres, for it represents "the break-through of the unconditioned [Durchbruch des Unbedingten] into the world of the conditioned."[1] If it is made one sphere next to others, its character as unconditioned is dissolved. The irresolvable conflict that arises between philosophy and theology is, however, intolerable for Tillich; for it "destroys the unity of consciousness and leads to the dissolution of religion or culture."[2] This dilemma can only be resolved, according to Tillich, by the method of "synthesis." He states: "Only the way of synthesis is genuine; it is demanded even when it fails again and again. But it must not fail. There is a point at which philosophy and the doctrine of revelation are one. To find this point and with this as a start create the synthetic solution, this is the characteristic task of the philosophy of religion."[3] It is because of Tillich's genuine interest in religion and culture, in philosophy and theology, and his desire to resolve the conflicts between them by the method of synthesis, that he likes to describe his position as that of one standing "on the boundary."[4] His problem is to find an inner point of contact between philosophy and theology, a point where they are united in such a way as to provide a basis for the dissolution of the contradiction created

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[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid., p. 299. See also his "Autobiographical Reflections," op. cit., p. 10.

[4] Interpretation of History, pp. 30-41, 49-54.

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by the universal claims of each taken separately. In order to find this point of unity, an analysis of the nature of religion and its relation to culture is required. It is noteworthy, moreover, that the task of finding this point of contact is assigned to the philosophy of religion.[1]

It is not immediately apparent, however, how the philosophy of religion should accomplish its task; for it is the basic problem of philosophy of religion, Tillich contends, that religion resists all attempts to make it an object of philosophy, and that religion is antithetical to the philosophical concept of religion employed in the philosophy of religion.[2] In order, therefore, to see whether or not it is possible for the philosophy of religion to perform its assigned task, the nature of the conflict between religion and the philosophical concept "religion" must be examined in order to determine how, if at all, this conflict can be eliminated.

Religion and the Philosophical Concept of Religion

The protest of genuine religion against the philosophical concept of religion is the theme of a significant essay which appeared in 1922.[3] Tillich outlines the objections of religion to the philosophical concept of religion employed most frequently in the philosophy of religion. A comprehensive philosophy of religion is not developed in this work; in it, however, Tillich sets down some of the principles which a philosophy of religion must observe if it is not to destroy the very object which it seeks to understand.

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[1] In his later work, by contrast, the task of finding the relation between philosophy and theology is assigned to systematic theology. Philosophy of religion, therefore, plays an important role in Tillich's early thought and a relatively minor one in his recent thought.

[2] "Philosophy of Religion," p. 297.

[3] "Die Ueberwindung des Religionsbegriffs in der Religionsphilosophie," op. cit., pp. 365-388 (cited after this as "Overcoming the Concept of Religion").

The main objections which genuine religion raises against the philosophical concept "religion" are that it makes the certainty of God relative to the certainty of the self, it makes God relative to the world, it makes religion relative to culture, and it makes revelation relative to the history of religion. The essence of all of these objections is that the philosophical concept "religion" bases the unconditional upon the conditional, thus making it conditional and destroying it.[1] The main point of these objections must now be considered in more detail.

The philosophical concept "religion" destroys the certainty and reality of God, and religion becomes a function of the human spirit, next to the other spiritual functions. But it is not clear where among the functions of the spirit religion should be placed. Tillich depicts religion as "homeless," vainly seeking a place among the various functions.

> First it looked for its home in some other function, in the practical function; but autonomous ethics is complete without religion, and so dissolves religion or sends it along elsewhere, to the theoretical realm. But autonomous philosophy has no need of religion, subjugates it as a preliminary stage, as a transition, dissolves it and sends it along to feeling. But feeling accompanies all functions; thus it becomes a particular feeling, perhaps for the universe; but then it is no longer the function but the object that determines religion. Thus the search goes

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 366.

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> on for a place of its own for the homeless, a province of the spiritual life (Schleiermacher), a religious apriori (Tröltsch), the highest class of acts (Scheler); and thus one may be ethical, scientific, aesthetic, political, and also religious. The unconditional stands beside the conditional. But religion does not permit one to be also religious; it does not permit one to be "religious" at all.[1]

Genuine religion at most uses the concept "religion" as a predicate of the false religions which do not bring salvation. "Religion," therefore, is a disparaging word; it indicates merely the desire for God but not the possession of him. Hence, revelation cannot be based on the concept of religion; for if it is so based, it is either dissolved into rationalism with occasional supranatural assistance or reduced to cultural history.[2]

In Tillich's view, philosophy of religion has been dominated by the philosophical concept "religion" throughout most of its history, especially in modern times, and in the Western world. He sees philosophy of religion as having passed through three periods which he calls: rational, critical, and intuitive. The rational period is characterized by an unconscious domination of the concept of religion. This period extends from the Renaissance to its peak in the Enlightenment. From Galileo on, the mathematical natural sciences banished the supernatural. Nature became purely objective, rational, and technological; and it became possible to complete a conception of the world without God. This paved the way for the domination of the concept of religion. In Descartes already, the ego becomes the basis

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[1] Ibid., pp. 369-370. See Theology of Culture, pp. 6-7, for a similar description of the search of religion for a home among the various spiritual functions.

[2] Ibid., p. 370.

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of certainty and opens the way to God.[1] This attitude, implicit in Descartes, reaches its full significance in the philosophy of the Enlightenment which, with the aid of the category of cause and effect, tries to reach God, and bases the certainty of God on the certainty of the world and the power of logical deduction.[2] The certainty of God, and with it his reality, is thus destroyed. God becomes an element, the central one no doubt, but an element nevertheless, in the construction of the world. God becomes "the bearer of world harmony, the ingenious watchmaker of the cosmic system, the mediator between subject and object, always technological, always objective, a thing--even when he is called the locus of ideas or that which lies beyond thought and extension. . . . The God who is to supplement the world is world and not God."[3]

The critical period is one in which the concept of religion consciously dominates the philosophy of religion. As Kant realized, the cosmological approach to God (which characterizes the "rational" period) cannot reach its goal without the ontological proof, but the ontological approach "is possible only where consciousness stands in immediate unity with the unconditioned."[4] With the independent status of the world and the objectification of God, this immediate awareness was lost; the ontological argument becomes "a syllogism the premises of which will yield no conclusion." As such, the ontological argument was properly criticized, and the criticism of it indicates the end of the rational and the beginning of the critical period. In

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[1] Ibid., p. 371. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid., p. 372.

[4] Ibid., p. 371.

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the critical period, the certainty of God loses its theoretical meaning; the ontological and cosmological arguments are replaced by the moral argument for God. The moral proof for God, however, does little more than "to give the consecration of the unconditioned to moral autonomy."[1] In the critical period religion becomes a special kind of experience of the world that is dissolved in philosophy, as in Hegel, or is placed entirely in the subject. "The concept of religion, which meant to lead from the ego to God, has sunk back into the ego again."[2] There is no longer in this period a God apart from the world. The deism of the rational period becomes pantheism in the critical, and with this development, religion is reduced to culture. "The unity of God and the world, therefore, is once more established but not . . . from the point of view of a God who has received the world into himself, but from the point of view of a world that has received God into itself."[3] The critical period, according to Tillich, is more consistent than the rational period and, in addition, is of value as "a powerful reaction against the objective exhaustion and secularization of the world."[4]

The third period is one in which the concept of religion loses its complete control. Tillich refers to this period alternatively as the "phenomenological" or "intuitive" period. It begins with the turn of the century through the influence of phenomenological philosophy, broadly conceived. It is a conscious attack on the concept of religion. Of particular importance in this period are Otto's conception

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[1] _Ibid._, pp. 372-373. [2] _Ibid._, p. 373. [3] _Ibid._

[4] _Ibid._, p. 374.

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of the numinous as a "reality that breaks through object forms" and Scheler's "elevation of the value of the holy above all other levels of value."[1] But the concept of religion is not entirely overcome in this period. This is especially true in regard to Scheler who allows "metaphysics to dissolve itself with a sacrificium intellectus in favor of religion. Awareness of God is made thereby dependent on a self-negating awareness of the world. . . . God lives on sacrifice and disappears when the autonomous spirit refuses to bring the sacrifice. And the autonomous spirit must refuse in order not to become fragmented by theoretical judgments springing from an alien source."[2] Scheler also fails, according to Tillich, in that he seeks help from the idea of steps: religion is the highest cultural value, and the Christian religion is the highest holiness value. "The series of steps lets the higher step be based on the lower, both figuratively and factually. It becomes a thinking about below, about rising up; but there are no steps leading to the unconditioned. The highest is just as far away as the lowest."[3]

The failure of the philosophy of religion in its three modern periods to overcome the philosophical concept of religion raises the question: "Can this concept be banished at all? Or is it the fate of philosophy of religion to be subjected to this notion? Is it the fate of human history that only one of the two can be given in it--either religion or the philosophy of religion?"[4]

It is Tillich's hope, however, that this question can be

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[1] Ibid., p. 375.

[2] Ibid., pp. 375-376.

[3] Ibid., p. 376.

[4] Ibid., p. 377.

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answered negatively. He wants to find a way in which the philosophy of religion may be able to do justice to the nature of religion without violating its own nature as philosophy. "Overcoming the Concept of Religion" is Tillich's attempt to set down the basic features of the nature of religion which a philosophy of religion must recognize if it is to accomplish its task.

The most fundamental characteristic of genuine religion which the philosophy of religion must understand is that religion is based upon and directed toward the unconditioned. Since religion is concerned with the unconditioned, the philosophy of religion may not base it upon the conditioned. "A philosophy of religion that wants to do justice to the nature of the unconditioned must comprehend the unconditioned in everything conditioned as that which grounds both itself and the conditioned."[1] A philosophy of religion which wishes to do justice to the unconditional character of religion must itself begin with the unconditioned, for "God is either the beginning or he is nothing."[2] God cannot be reached if one starts with the self, nor can the certainty of God be based upon self-certainty. The self, for Tillich, is itself a part of the conditional medium through which the unconditioned must be comprehended; it is the "locus at which the unconditioned is revealed in the conditioned."[3]

More must be said, however, about the unconditioned and the possibility of philosophizing about it. Religion, as directed to the unconditioned, is neither a single cultural function nor a synthesis of cultural functions. It is rather a "spiritual function,"

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[1] *Ibid.*

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 380.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 377.

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that is expressed in and through the other functions. Insofar as it is not a function beside other functions, it can even be called a function only paradoxically; it is the function by which "the spirit breaks through all its forms to its ground," and is that through which the conditional functions receive their significance and reality.[1]

The difficulty with which philosophy is faced in attempting to deal with the unconditioned stems from the theoretical character of statements. All statements assume the form of the subject-object scheme, but the unconditioned is neither subject nor object. "The meaning of every statement about the unconditioned," Tillich maintains, "must be distinguished in principle from the meaning of every statement about the conditioned."[2] Nevertheless, the philosophy of religion must make statements, and these will of necessity be conditional, that is, in the subject-object form. But philosophy of religion must be aware of the inadequacy of all its statements because of their conditional form and the objective concepts which they contain.[3] The statement "God is," for example, is theoretical as to its form; but if its content or meaning is also theoretical, then it is no longer an "expression of the affirmation of the unconditioned," but a denial of God's divinity because it "represents an attempt to place God in the world of objects."[4] Moreover, since God is not an object, but the "presupposition of every possible antithesis of subject and object," God's reality is not something that can be made the subject of a theoretical inquiry. "The comprehension of the unconditioned," says

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[1] _Ibid_., p. 380. [2] _Ibid_., p. 377.

[3] _Ibid_. [4] _Ibid_., p. 378.

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Tillich, "is prior to every theoretical judgment and independent of all theoretical certainty."[1] The certainty of God is implicitly present in all certainty, and the consciousness of everyone is bound to God, at least objectively; subjectively, however, the consciousness can be alienated from God. Whether or not the consciousness is subjectively aware of God may make no theoretical difference whatever, but does make a decisive religious difference.[2]

In "Overcoming the Concept of Religion," Tillich attempts to point out the basic characteristics of religion which the philosophy of religion must take into account if it wishes to speak of genuine religion. Precisely how the philosophy of religion is to go about its task, however, is left unclear. If philosophy of religion is to be able to overcome the disruption of meaning brought about by the separation of religion and culture, Tillich became convinced, it must be shown how the philosophy of religion and theology fit into the whole structure of human knowledge. Tillich attempted this in his book, The System of the Sciences, which appeared in 1923.[3] The implications of this work for the philosophy of religion were elaborated further and made more explicit in an essay, "Philosophy of Religion"[4]

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[1] Ibid.   [2] Ibid., pp. 378-380.

[3] Das System der Wissenschaften nach Gegenständen und Methoden. Reprinted in Frühe Hauptwerke, pp. 111-293, to which volume the page numbers in this study refer. This work will be cited, hereafter, as The System of the Sciences.

For a more detailed examination of this work than is given in the present study, see James Luther Adams, Paul Tillich's Philosophy of Culture, Science, and Religion (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), Chapter IV, "The System of the Sciences," pp. 116-182. For a very brief introduction to this work, see Christoph Rhein, Paul Tillich: Philosoph und Theologe (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1957), pp. 51-59. Both treatments, however, like the present study, deal almost exclusively with the "sciences of spirit."

[4] Op. cit., pp. 297-364.

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which appeared two years later.

The System of the Sciences

The System of the Sciences is, without doubt, the most difficult and obscure book that Tillich ever wrote. An indication of the complexity of this book is provided by the fact that the editor of a prominent theological journal in Germany was unable to get anyone to review it.[1] It is a temptation, therefore, for the student of Tillich to pass it by. Although it will be impossible, within the scope of this study, to give a thorough exposition of this book, it cannot be ignored; for it, together with "Philosophy of Religion," contains Tillich's early view of the nature of the relation between philosophy, religion, and theology. Further, although Tillich expresses his conceptions of philosophy, theology, and their relation quite differently in his more recent writings, many of the ideas formulated in these early works have continued to remain operative in the background of his later thought. Thus, a consideration of Tillich's conception of the relation between philosophy and theology cannot ignore these works, although much in them is admittedly very obscure.

While The System of the Sciences is not what one would call a theological book, it was motivated by religious and theological concerns.[2] Tillich has himself referred to this book as the one where he began the theological work that culminated in his Systematic Theology,[1] the first volume of which appeared nearly three decades after The System of the Sciences. While Tillich attempts a classification of all the sciences, it is clear that his interest lies mainly in what he calls "the sciences of spirit," and within these he is primarily concerned to find a place for philosophy of religion and theology. A place must be found for the philosophy of religion and theology among the sciences if the conflicts between religion and culture are to be overcome. Only if theology can find a place in a unified scheme of knowing can a disruption of meaning be avoided. At the same time, however, the position of theology in the system of the sciences must be such that it is not simply another science among many sciences. If this condition is not fulfilled, no advance whatever will be made from the situation dominated by the concept of religion, in which religion, and consequently theology, loses its transcendent character.

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[1] The details of this incident are recounted by Adams, op. cit., p. 121.

[2] See: Interpretation of History, p. 38. Here Tillich says, concerning The System of the Sciences: "My final concern here was the question: 'How is theology possible as a science? How is it related, like its several offsprings to the other sciences? What is outstanding in its method?'" See also, Rhein, op. cit., p. 52.

According to Tillich, there are three fundamental kinds of sciences: first, what he calls "thought or ideal sciences"; second, "being or real sciences"; and finally, "spirit or norm sciences".[2] Among the sciences of "thought" are logic and mathematics; the sci-

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[1] The Protestant Era, p. xxii. Here he states: "I have traveled a long way to my present theological position, a way that started in my first larger book, Das System der Wissenschaften. . . . In many respects the ideas developed in this book have determined my thinking up to the present moment, especially those on biology, technical sciences, history, and metaphysics."

[2] The System of the Sciences, pp. 124, 135, 210. The terms used to designate these three types of science are: "Die Denk- oder Idealwissenschaften," "Die Seins- oder Realwissenschaften," and "Die Geistes- oder Normwissenschaften."

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ences of "being" are subdivided into three types: "law" sciences, "gestalt" sciences, and "sequence" sciences; included in the sciences of being are the natural sciences, psychology, sociology, anthropology, cultural and political history. Spiritual or normative sciences are divided by Tillich into two groups: a theoretical series including science, art, and metaphysics, and a practical series which consists of law, community, and ethics. The structure of the system of the sciences, Tillich believes, is not arbitrary but expresses "the system of the functions of the spirit. The structure of the spirit becomes apparent through the various directions in which science finds and delineates its objects."[1]

The system of the sciences is constructed on the basis of the analysis of the idea of knowledge [Wissen]; this idea is taken as the principle of the system because it is the essence of science.[2] An examination of the idea of knowledge indicates that there are two aspects to every act of knowledge: the act itself and that to which it is directed, or that which the act intends. The act itself is called "thought" and that to which it is directed, "being." These two are the basic elements contained in knowledge. "Thought" [Denken] as used here is not to be associated with anything relating to the psychological act of reflection [Nachdenken]; and "being" does not refer to existing [seienden] things. These concepts, as usually employed, assume the unity of thought and being; but Tillich is using these to refer to the basic elements of knowledge, not to "knowledge-contents" [Wissensinhalte].[3] "Thought," therefore, can only be de-

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[1] Ibid., p. 115. [2] Ibid., p. 117. [3] Ibid., p. 118.

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fined as "that which is directed to being" and "being" as "what is intended by thought." The relation between the two elements of knowledge in the act of knowledge is described in three propositions: "1. Being is posited in thought as what is grasped or conceived, as a concept of thought. 2. Being is sought by thought as that which is strange, elusive, resistant to it. 3. Thought is present to itself in the act of thought; it is directed toward itself and makes itself a being."[1] These three propositions are called, respectively: the principle of absolute thought, the principle of absolute being, and the principle of spirit. Tillich explains these three propositions in the following way. Thought tries to comprehend its objects completely, and to this end employs concepts, laws, and relations. But these are themselves creations of thought. Thus all reality is dissolved into the unity of thought; being itself is reduced to thought. Nevertheless, in all thinking something more is thought than thought itself; this something, which lies beyond the process of thought itself, confronts consciousness as something that "is," as something that cannot be resolved into thought. This is "being," and as opposed to thought, it is strange to it; there is an infinite gap between them, a gap, however, which is always at least partially overcome in cognition. There is, Tillich maintains, a conflict of unity and alienation [Fremdheit] between the basic elements of knowledge in every act of thinking; the tension produced by this conflict is expressed in the first two propositions.[1]

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[1] Ibid. "Das Sein ist im Denken gesetzt als das Umfasste, Begriffene, also Denkbestimmung. 2. Das Sein ist vom Denken gesucht als das Fremde, Unfassbare, dem Denken Widerstrebende. 3. Das Denken ist sich selbst gegenwärtig im Denkakt; es ist auf sich selbst gerichtet und macht sich selbst zu einem Seienden."

The third proposition indicates that thought directs itself not only to being, but also to itself, and in so doing makes of itself an object for itself. "Thought places itself under all the conditions and determinations which belong to being, and in which thought has resolved being. Thought becomes a part of existence [ein Stück Existenz]."[2] Thought as an object for itself, as existing and living, Tillich calls "spirit." Out of the two basic elements of knowledge, thought and being, Tillich arrives, by exploring their relationship in the act of knowledge, at the three concepts of "thought," "being," and "spirit" which become the foundation for his tripartite division of the sciences in the system of the sciences.

Tillich is fully aware that there can be no science of pure thought in complete separation from being, just as there can be no science of pure being without thought. There is no absolute antithesis between sciences of thought and sciences of being, but there is, nevertheless, a fundamental distinction. "In the sciences of thought, the understanding [Erkenntnis] directs itself toward thought insofar as it is separate from every definite content; it directs itself, that is, to the universal forms with which each content must unite, since they are the very forms of thought themselves."[3] In the sciences of thought, therefore, thought is directed to its own forms, whereas in the sciences of being "thought steps outside of itself and gives itself to being" and tries to grasp not its own forms but the "other" or the "object."[4]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 118-119.

[2] Ibid., pp. 119-120.

[3] Ibid., pp. 120-121.

[4] Ibid.

The third element is spirit or "thought as phenomenon [Erscheinung] or as being next to other being." It is the basis of the third group of sciences, the spiritual or normative sciences. When thought thinks upon itself, it is not a mere spectator as it is in regard to other objects, but it at the same time "determines, criticizes, and gives norms to itself." These sciences are, therefore, "productive" in that in them thought is creative and gives laws.[1]

An examination of the details of the sciences of thought and being cannot be undertaken here; but the basic structure of the normative sciences or sciences of spirit must be explored, for it is among these that philosophy, religion, and theology are eventually placed. The way, however, in which these three fit into the scheme of the normative sciences is a very complex matter; they are not, that is, simply three sciences on a plane with the other normative sciences. Thus, in order to understand Tillich's conception of philosophy, religion, and theology and their relation to other cultural spheres, some attention must be directed to the structure of this third group of sciences.

The Sciences of Spirit

Three principles determine the structure of the sciences of spirit: the elements, the spiritual attitude, and the objects. Each of these requires some comment.

The Elements of the Sciences of Spirit

Each of the sciences of spirit is composed of three elements, following the triad of thought, being, and spirit. The three elements are: "philosophy," or the study of the principles of meaning; "history or spirit," or the study of the material of meaning; and "Systematics," or the doctrine of the norms of meaning [Sinnoremenlehre]. These must now be examined.

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[1] *Ibid*., p. 121.

Tillich conceives of philosophy as the "study of the principles of meaning, or the theory of the spiritual functions and categories."[1] "Functions" are spiritual act-directions [Aktrichtungen] by means of which independent meaning realms are differentiated. "Categories" are the forms which constitute objects in the realms of meaning.[2] Through the meaning functions or act-tendencies the human spirit brings about its relation to reality in valid ways and thus contructs a meaningful reality. A meaning realm may be considered independent if it is necessary for the contruction of a meaningful reality;[3] it is necessary that is, if without it the spiritual unity of consciousness would be disrupted, thus making reality senseless. The system of meaning functions, however, is not the object of evidence, but of convinction. Its certainty is the living certainty that a spirit has of itself. The life of the spirit, however, is not static; the inner infinity of the spirit forces it beyond each of its creative actualizations; hence the

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[1] Ibid., p. 231.

[2] Ibid., p. 232. Tillich's presentation of his conception of meaning functions and categories is not entirely clear. In view of the structure of the sciences of spirit as he elaborates it, however, it may be said that he construes metaphysics, ethics, science, and law as examples of meaning functions or independent meaning realms. Each of these realms, then, has its own categories.

[3] Ibid. "Das Kriterium für die Selbständigkeit und Notwendigkeit eines Sinngebietes ist demgemäss seine Unentbehrlichkeit für den Aufbau einer sinnvollen Wirklichkeit."

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unity of meaning in which the spirit lives does not have the unconditionedness of a pure form.[1] Categories are the meaning forms which constitute the objects in each meaning-realm. "The reality of meaning together with its objects is grounded through the application of the categories to being according to a meaning function."[2] The categories are not objects, but are presupposed in the understanding of every object. Like the meaning functions, they must be grasped through critical understanding and do not possess the characteristic of certainty.

The concepts "thought" and "being" must be employed to express the nature of meaning itself. "They are the elements of meaning and the foundation for the grasping of the meaning functions and categories. They themselves, however, are neither functions nor categories. They constitute no realm of meaning and no object of meaning but they constitute meaning itself. They are valid, therefore, for all realms of meaning. . . ."[3] The principle of meaning itself is the duality of meaning-form and meaning-content. The nature of meaning is destroyed if thought and being are considered among the categories.[4]

Every realm of meaning has its own categories. There are, for example, categories of knowledge, and aesthetic, metaphysical, and ethical categories. There is thus philosophy of science, of art, of metaphysics, and of morals, but there is no philosophy of being. Thus the functions of meaning can be considered in general, in which case we speak of "philosophy," or the functions may be considered in relation to particular realms of meaning, in which case one can speak of philosophy of the realm in question. In all the realms, however, philosophy is concerned with the functions and categories of meaning.[1]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 232-233. [2] Ibid., p. 233.

[3] Ibid., p. 234. [4] Ibid.

The second element of the cultural sciences is history of spirit; it provides the material of meaning (in contrast to philosophy which deals with the "principles" of meaning). It is only in history, in the individual creations of the human spirit, that the principles of meaning reach concrete actualization. Every particular creative fulfillment of meaning takes place in history, and each spiritual creation is determined through the historical place in which its creator stands. The task of the history of spirit, then, is to understand the concrete norms of the historical process in the light of the principle of meaning and so provide the theory of norms with the material for normative judgment. "The starting point for the history of spirit is the principle of meaning, and its goal is the norm of meaning. The path of the science of spirit proceeds from the theory of meaning through the theory of material to the theory of norm."[2]

The third element of the sciences of spirit is the theory of norms or systematics. The principle of meaning, filled with the material of meaning, becomes the norm of meaning. The principle of meaning is universal in its intention and is valid for everything. The norms of meaning are produced in definite historical points, and have therefore "the concreteness and particularity of individual spiritual creation."[1] The norms of meaning are the fulfillments of the universal, but abstract principles of meaning. Accordingly, a distinction must be made between philosophy and systematics with regard to each of the realms of meaning. One should distinguish, therefore, between philosophy of science and normative theory of science, between philosophy of art and normative theory of art (aesthetics), and so on.[2]

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 238-239. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 238-239.

A certain tension exists between philosophy and systematics.

> Philosophy directs itself to the universal, from which point of view every appearance is understood and every concrete norm is grasped in its conditionedness. It is the element which is critical, changeable, turned toward thought and reason. Systematics directs itself to the universally valid, from which point of view all remaining norms are denied and its special system receives a practical-normative meaning. It is the positive, fixed element, that which is turned toward being and the realization of life.[3]

In characteristic Tillichian fashion, however, this sharp distinction is not permitted to stand unqualified, but is immediately modified. He does not mean that philosophy is purely critical while systematics is entirely positive. Philosophy is also positive; moreover, it must lift the principles of meaning from concrete and living realizations of meaning; but in so doing it is dependent on systematics. "Without concrete realizations of meaning there can be no abstract understanding of meaning, and without a world of meaning-objects there can be no principles of meaning."[4] It is also important for the doctrine of norms to be both critical and positive; for if the doctrine of norms renounces the critical element--philosophy, it becomes a mere presentation of existing norms and loses its tendency toward the universal.

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[1] *Ibid*., p. 241.

[2] *Ibid*., pp. 241-242.

[3] *Ibid*., p. 242.

[4] *Ibid*.

When this happens, the theory of norms has significance only in a particular historical context; and if it continues to claim universal validity for itself, it becomes heteronomous. On the other hand, if the doctrine of norms relinquishes the positive element, it becomes a mere abstract scheme of rational forms and loses its concrete and living connection with reality. One cannot say, therefore, that philosophy is the rational, history of spirit the empirical, and systematics the individual-creative element. It is, rather, a matter of emphasis. Philosophy is more critical than the others, history of spirit more receptive, and systematics is more productive.[1]

Systematics is that element of the sciences of spirit which is concerned with establishing the norms of meaning. Something must now be said, therefore, about the normative character of the sciences of spirit. Norms, according to Tillich, "are born in the creative process of spirit. . . . They neither reside in an ideal sphere as do the pure forms of the sciences of thought, nor do they have immediate actuality like the structures of the sciences of being, but they have the characteristic reality which the creative process of spirit gives to them."[2] The normative character of the spiritual sciences belongs to them essentially; it characterizes their existence as spirit. Every spiritual act is an act which establishes norms, by virtue of the fact that all of the forms created by the spirit are directed toward the unconditioned. The norms so produced by the spirit are saved from mere subjectivity because of their orientation to the unconditioned.[3]

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[1] _Ibid_. [2] _Ibid_., pp. 220-221. [3] _Ibid_., p. 221.

The Attitudes of the Spirit

All thought is directed to the comprehension of being, Tillich believes, and every creative act of the spirit attempts to grasp the unconditioned. Being, however, is infinite for thought; it is the content and the unconditional meaning which gives reality and meaning to all particular forms. Nevertheless, "every spiritual meaning-fulfilling act carries within itself the _eros_ for the unconditional meaning."[1] The desire to comprehend the unconditioned, however, can be expressed in two ways, ways which indicate two distinct spiritual attitudes. The two spiritual attitudes are called "autonomy" and "theonomy."

The autonomous attitude attempts to grasp being through the forms and their validity. The primary concern, therefore, of this attitude is not with the extent to which a form expresses the content of being, but with the correctness and validity of the form. The autonomous attitude seeks forms which can best satisfy the demand of unconditional validity.[2] Autonomy, therefore, is the attitude in which consciousness is essentially aimed at the conditioned and turns to the unconditioned only in order to provide a foundation for the conditioned.[3]

Theonomy is the attitude in which the spirit is determined by the desire to comprehend the unconditioned immediately. It uses conditional forms, because the unconditioned has no forms of its own; but in so doing, its purpose is to grasp the unconditional content in them. Theonomy, therefore, is not primarily concerned with the validity of

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[1] _Ibid._, p. 227. [2] _Ibid._ [3] _Ibid._, p. 271.

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form, but with the ability of forms to express the unconditioned.[1] Theonomy is the attitude, one may say, in which the unconditioned is the end and the conditioned a means; autonomy, by contrast, is the attitude in which the conditioned is the end and the unconditioned only a means.

Theonomy and autonomy are not functions of meaning, but are the possible directions of the functions of meaning. The opposition between theonomy and autonomy rests on the tension between the elements of meaning, thought and being.

> Theonomy is the tendency toward being as pure content, as the abyss of every form of thought. Autonomy is the tendency toward thought as the bearer of the forms and their validity. In the tension between theonomy and autonomy, the tension of the elements of meaning which is decisive for all realms of meaning comes to its final abyss, but at the same time to its fundamental solution. For it becomes apparent that all fulfillment of meaning is possible only in the unity of both directions: autonomy by itself leads to empty, contentless forms, theonomy by itself leads to formless content. But one is as unreal as the other. The living realization of meaning displays unending transitions between the elements of meaning, and the ideal meaning of all meaning is the unity of both elements.[2]

The sciences of spirit must establish norms for both the autonomous and theonomous territories of meaning. There are functions of the spirit which realize the autonomous and those that realize the theonomous attitude;[3] the distinction between autonomy and theonomy, therefore, is a factor which determines the structure of the system of the sciences of spirit.

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[1] _Ibid._, p. 227. [2] _Ibid._, p. 272.

[3] _Ibid._, pp. 227-228. The spiritual functions directed to the unconditioned are metaphysics and ethics. The opposition between autonomy and theonomy is, therefore, most directly effective in these domains. The other realms of meaning treated by Tillich--science, art, community, and law--are directed autonomously to valid forms. This will become more clear in the following sections of this chapter.

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The presupposition of the distinction between autonomy and theonomy is that "religion is not a sphere of meaning next to others, but an attitude in all spheres: the immediate direction toward the unconditioned."[1] Thus, the normative science of religion cannot be concerned with an object alongside others, but with a possible attitude in all the territories of meaning. "The normative science of religion is theonomous science of spirit."[2]

The Objects of the Sciences of Spirit

The elements and the spiritual attitudes receive their content through the objects of the sciences of spirit. The objects are the spiritual spheres [_Geistesgebiete_]. Tillich's classification of the spiritual realms is based on the two-fold nature of the spiritual acts in which the spiritual personality establishes its relation to reality. The two-fold act of the spirit is described as "the assimilation of reality into itself" and "the projection of the self into reality."[3] The first aspect is called "theoretical;" through it universal thought-relationships are established. In the theoretical act, the spiritual personality absorbs the forms of reality; for the spirit can carry in itself things only as forms. The second aspect of the spiritual act is called "practical;" through it a being-relationship [_Seinsbeziehung_] is established.[4] "A free, meaning-

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[1] _Ibid_., p. 228. [2] _Ibid_.

[3] _Ibid_., p. 229. The German phrase used to describe the two-fold act of the spirit is: "das Aufnehmen der Wirklichkeit in sich und das Sich-hinein-Gestalten in die Wirklichkeit." See also, "Philosophy of Religion," p. 322.

[4] _Ibid_.

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fulfilling being-relationship, however, is only possible between creatures which have assimilated the universal into themselves, and thus only between spiritual personalities."[1] The double nature of the acts by which the spirit establishes thought and being relationships is the basis for the division of the spiritual spheres into a theoretical series consisting of "science," "art," and "metaphysics," and a practical series consisting of "law," "community," and "ethics."

The spiritual act, however, can be directed toward the particular form and the particular being or it can be directed to the unconditioned which supports every particular as the foundation of particular fulfillments of meaning. Those functions which are directed to the unconditioned Tillich calls "supporting" [_fundierenden_], those dependent on the unconditioned but not directed toward it, he calls the "supported" [_fundierten_] functions. And for the supported functions there are two possibilities: "they can be directed to the forms in which the theoretical and practical relationships are represented, and they can be directed to the content which the forms bring to expression."[2] These two possible directions of the supported functions are thus called "form-determined" and "content-determined," respectively. From these principles the following structure of the realms of meaning emerges: in the theoretical sphere, _science_ is the supported form-determined function, _art_ the supported content-determined function, and _metaphysics_ is the supporting function of both; in the practical sphere, _law_ is the supported function determined as form, _community_ the supported according to content, and _ethics_ the supporting function of both.[3] Tillich's views on science, art, law, community, and ethics cannot be pursued here. Some attention must, however, be given to his conception of metaphysics, since it plays an important role in his conception of the relation between philosophy and theology.

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[1] _Ibid_. [2] _Ibid_. [3] _Ibid_., p. 230.

Metaphysics is the supporting function of the theoretical sphere, supporting science (the form-determined function) and art (the content-determined function). In characterizing metaphysics as a "supporting" function, Tillich means that it is directed to the unconditioned; the "supported" functions, by contrast, are directed to the conditioned. As essentially directed to the conditioned, the supported functions are by nature autonomous; there is no distinct theonomous science, art, law, or community. On the other hand, metaphysics (and ethics--the supporting function of the practical sphere) as the function directed toward the unconditioned can be either autonomous or theonomous.[1]

The attack of critical philosophy upon metaphysics, Tillich asserts, is fully justified insofar as it is directed "against the attempt to place metaphysics on a level with science."[2] The conception of metaphysics as a rational science, he believes, is a "complete departure from the fundamental metaphysical attitude."[3] It at-

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[1] *Ibid*., pp. 227-228. While metaphysics *can* be either autonomous or theonomous, it is essentially theonomous. Autonomous metaphysics is a distortion of the true nature of metaphysics and leads to its destruction.

It should be noted that Tillich does not construe metaphysics as a branch of philosophy. Metaphysics is an independent function of the spirit, while philosophy is one of the elements in each of the sciences of spirit. Thus, according to the structure of the sciences of spirit as Tillich elaborates it, there is a philosophy of metaphysics, a history of metaphysics, and a normative metaphysics.

[2] *Ibid*., p. 251.

[3] *Ibid*., pp. 251-252.

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tempts to bring metaphysics into the sphere of the conditioned. The rejection of metaphysics as a rational science does not, however, justify a general rejection of metaphysics; for "there is no spiritual attitude without metaphysics."[1]

Metaphysics is the attempt of consciousness to grasp the unconditioned, and the philosophy of metaphysics must show that the tendency toward the unconditioned is a necessary function by means of which the reality of meaning is constituted. "It must show that the prius of every comprehension of meaning is the unconditional meaning itself, the prius of every form of meaning is the tendency toward unconditional form, and the prius of every meaning content is the unconditional content. Thus, the concept of the unconditioned stands at the center of metaphysics."[2] Metaphysics, however, is not concerned with the question of the existence of the unconditioned. Such a question is meaningless because the unconditioned as the coherence of meaning is presupposed in the asking of it. "The unconditioned cannot be demonstrated, but can only be pointed to as the supporting meaning of all fulfillments of meaning."[3]

The comprehension of the unconditioned involved in metaphysics is independent of the scientific and aesthetic understandings of the world. On the other hand, metaphysics uses scientific and aesthetic forms of expression because it has no such forms of its own.

> The formal means of expression of metaphysics is the concept. That is the scientific element in it, and is the basis of the perennial disputes over boundaries between science and metaphysics. But the sense in which metaphysics employs the scientific concepts is aesthetic. The intention is not directed to the concepts as forms of reality, but as the expression of the content of reality. Upon this is based the aesthetic element, which dwells within every creative metaphysics.[4]

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[1] Ibid., p. 252. [2] Ibid., p. 254. [3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid. See also: "Philosophy of Religion," pp. 302-303.

This is not to say that the metaphysical attitude is a synthesis of the scientific and aesthetic attitudes; rather it is the foundation for them. "Metaphysics is the original unity out of which both science and art have come forth and to which they strive to return."[1] Thus metaphysics is conceived as wanting to grasp the unconditioned; the paradox contained in all metaphysics is that the unconditioned can be comprehended only in the forms of the conditioned. One can say, therefore, that all metaphysical concepts are symbolic. Their chief characteristic is expressiveness and not validity, at least not in the same sense as science. "The central concept of metaphysics is the unity of reality itself. It is the task of the system of metaphysical symbols to show this unity, the categories out of which it is constructed, and the valuation which comes to expression in the structure."[2] The symbolic character of metaphysics does not, however, imply arbitrariness; the choice of symbols is based on the metaphysical attitude and on the conceptual material offered by science. Metaphysics depends on science for the formation of its concepts. If it claims for its concepts scientific validity, it loses its character as the tendency toward the unconditioned, and becomes heteronomous.[3]

Metaphysics is concerned primarily with the study of the elements of meaning. "Genuine metaphysics," Tillich maintains, "is metaphysics of meaning."[4] Metaphysics, that is, is concerned not with the being, but with the meaning of the unconditioned. The unconditioned cannot be studied scientifically because it is not a being; it can only be grasped through the exhibition of the elements that constitute meaning.

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[1] Ibid., p. 254. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid., p. 255.

"Ontology" is conceived of as the metaphysics of being. Its concern is with the question of the relation of the unconditioned to beings, and its task is to indicate "in what manner being as a whole, as a universal gestalt, is a symbol for the unconditional meaning."[1] Ontology does not attempt to find a being behind the world, but to exhibit the structure of being and its unity as the expression of meaning.[2]

Theonomous Science of Spirit

Up to this point, Tillich has developed the system of the sciences within the autonomous sphere. The role of the theonomous attitude in the system of the sciences must now be considered. The distinction between autonomy and theonomy, it was said, is based on the view that religion is not a special sphere of the spirit, but is the spiritual attitude of theonomy, active in all spheres--the attitude of intending the unconditioned. The theonomous science of spirit, therefore, is the normative science of religion. The theonomous science of spirit is not another science next to an autonomous science of spirit. Ideally, the two are united; their separation is a sign that the unity of meaning has been disrupted.

> Theonomous science of spirit is not in its idea a science alongside the autonomous science. It is the expression of a cultural conflict not yet resolved if both stand next to each other, and it follows from such a situation that the task for both is to overcome the conflict, for autonomy to take in the theonomous element, and for theonomy to take in the autonomous element.

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[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid.

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> For in truth there is only one spiritual science which must proceed from the unconditioned and the conditioned, from content and from form. If our system of the spiritual sciences has taken into consideration the duality of the spiritual attitude, this is an expression of the actual situation; but it contradicts the ideal condition in which the unity is given.[1]

The theonomous science of spirit follows the systematic structure of spiritual science outlined in connection with the autonomous sphere. As a normative science, the study of religion contains the three elements: philosophy, spiritual history, and systematics. There is, thus, the philosophy of religion, the history of religion, and normative religion or "theology."[2] Philosophy of religion is concerned with the theory of religious functions and categories. The historical interpretation of religion has to understand critically the individual actualizations of the concept of religion in the history of religion, and must also attempt to find the theonomous content in all cultural creations. Theonomous systematics or "theology" is the "normative and systematic presentation of the concrete fulfillment of the concept of religion."[3] With this, the fundamental relationship between philosophy of religion and theology has been determined. Philosophy of religion and theology are inseparably bound to each other because they are two elements of the one normative science of religion. "Every theology is dependent upon the presupposed concept of religion, and every philosophy of religion depends on the concept of the norms of religion, and both depend on the comprehension of the historical material."[4]

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[1] Ibid., p. 273. [2] "Philosophy of Religion," pp. 299-302.

[3] Ibid., p. 301. See also, The System of the Sciences, pp. 273-277.

[4] Ibid.

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As to the objects or spiritual realms of the theonomous science of spirit, theonomous science is primarily concerned with metaphysics and ethics, and influences the domains of science, art, law, and community only indirectly. This is so because, as was seen earlier, metaphysics and ethics are the supporting functions or those directed toward the comprehension of the unconditioned, while the others are supported functions and directed toward the conditioned. The supported functions cannot endure in a pure theonomy; they become heteronomous and lose their validity. On the other hand, the supporting functions lose their independence in a spiritual situation that is purely autonomous.[1]

The rest of this chapter will be devoted to a brief consideration of Tillich's views on the philosophy of religion, the relation between religion and culture, and theology. The significance of these views for Tillich's later thought will also be indicated.

Philosophy of religion is devoted to the study of the functions and categories of religion. Religion, however, is not a separate realm of meaning, but the attitude of theonomy in all such realms.[2] Thus, there are no religious principles of meaning in addition to autonomous principles of meaning. The very term "philosophy of religion," Tillich contends, is "a symbol for the condition of conflict between autonomy and theonomy," and the separation and opposition between religion and culture thus symbolized must lead either to "the rational destruction of religion" or to "the heteronomous destruction

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[1] The System of the Sciences, p. 273.

[2] "Philosophy of Religion," p. 329.

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of culture."[1] Thus, philosophy of religion can only be justified if it is "theonomous philosophy;" and as such it has the task of determining the proper relation between autonomy and theonomy and of showing its own unity with autonomous philosophy. As Tillich puts it: "Philosophy of religion can be justified only as the theonomous doctrine of the principles of meaning which does not stand beside or above the autonomous, but which establishes with it the one right doctrine of the principles of meaning. The final aim of the philosophy of religion is the dissolution of itself [Selbstaufhebung] in favor of a theonomous philosophy which contains autonomy in itself as an equally justified element."[2]

As philosophy, the philosophy of religion is the study of the principles of meaning. To attempt a study of the meaning of "meaning," Tillich realizes, is a peculiar undertaking in that the concept of meaning cannot be explained by referring it to a higher concept. One must, therefore, attempt to make explicit the elements which are present in every consciousness of meaning. It is only through an analysis of these ever present elements that the philosophy of religion can unite autonomy and theonomy in a theonomous philosophy. Tillich finds in every consciousness of meaning a three-fold content. There is first, "the consciousness of a coherence of meaning in which every particular meaning stands and without which it would be meaningless." This Tillich calls consciousness of a "world." Second, there is a consciousness of "the meaningfulness of the coherence of meaning and

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[1] The System of the Sciences, p. 274.

[2] Ibid.

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therefore of every particular meaning; that is, the consciousness of an unconditional meaning that is present in all particular meanings." Finally, there is in every consciousness of meaning "the consciousness of a demand upon all particular meanings to realize the unconditional meaning."[1] The unconditional meaning, however, is not itself a meaning but rather the ground of meaning. The particular meanings and particular coherences of meaning up to the universal coherence of meaning can be called "forms of meaning" in relation to the unconditional meaning which is characterized as the "content of meaning." By "content of meaning," Tillich means "the meaningfulness which gives reality, significance, and substantiality to every particular meaning. In this connection the particular content is identical with the form of meaning."[2] In relation to the form of meaning, the content of meaning is the "ground of meaning;" but the content of meaning also represents the demand for an unconditional fulfillment of meaning, a demand, however, which only the perfect coherence of meaning, that is, the "unconditional form," can satisfy. The idea of an unconditional form, however, contradicts the form-content relationship.

> The meaningfulness of all meaning is the ground [Grund], but also the abyss [Abgrund] of every meaning, and also of the unconditional form of meaning. The idea that all ground of meaning could be exhausted in an unconditional form of meaning would dissolve the inner infinity of meaning; it would not be able to banish the possibility that all meaning could be submerged in meaninglessness. The unconditional meaningfulness of all meaning rests on the consciousness of the inexhaustibility of meaning in the ground of meaning. A perfect unity would be an exhaustion of the inner infinity of meaning. Yet, the demand for this unity persists in

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[1] "Philosophy of Religion," p. 318.

[2] Ibid., p. 319.

> every meaningful act, for only through the complete unity of all meaning can meaning arrive at an unconditional realization, that is, to form.[1]

This conception of meaning provides the foundation for a philosophy of religion and a philosophy of culture. Consciousness directed toward unconditional meaning, that is, the content of meaning, is *religion*; consciousness directed toward conditional forms and their unity is *culture*. Form and content, however, belong together; one cannot be supposed without the other. Thus, Tillich arrived at a basic tenet of his early period, and one which has decisive significance even in his later thought: "Culture is the form of expression for religion, and religion is the content of culture."[2] By this rather peculiar statement, Tillich means to assert that every cultural act contains unconditional meaning. It rests upon and derives its meaning from the ground of meaning. Insofar as any cultural act expresses a meaningful content, it is substantially religious; this does not imply, however, that the cultural act is intentionally religious. The cultural act

> is not directed toward the unconditioned as such, and if it is turned toward the unity of meaning it is not with . . . a religious consciousness. . . . On the other hand, the religious act cannot turn toward unconditional meaning except through the unity of the forms of meaning. Content without form cannot be the object of a meaningful act. Every religious act is thus, according to its form, a cultural act, directed toward the totality of meaning. The religious act, however, is not intentionally cultural; the content of meaning, the unconditional meaning, not the totality of meaning, is its purpose.[3]

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[1] *Ibid*.

[2] *Ibid*., p. 329. For a more recent statement of the same view, see *Theology of Culture*, p. 42.

[3] *Ibid*., p. 320.

Religion and culture, therefore, are bound together by a common concern with the unity of meaning. The essential unity of religion and culture is the unity of unconditional meaning content and conditional meaning form. The realization of this unity is theonomy, by which is meant "the fullness of all cultural forms with the content of the unconditioned."[1]

In the theonomous conception of the relation between religion and culture no separation between the two is indicated; but the whole cultural and religious situation betrays the fact that there is such a separation. If their separation is not the proper relation between religion and culture, it must be indicated how such a separation comes about. According to Tillich, the possibility of a separation between the two is based on "the possibility that the mind's attention becomes directed toward the conditional forms and their unity without looking back on the unconditional meaning, thus without giving expression to the negativity of the unconditioned against the unity of meaning. The separation of religion and culture depends on the absolutization of the conditioned."[2] The absolutization of the conditioned is called "autonomy;" against it, religion takes refuge in certain symbols which it prescribes as unconditionally authoritative; such a situation is called "heteronomy."

Metaphysics, according to Tillich, is "always and necessarily a religious attitude. *Metaphysics is the tendency toward the unconditioned in the theoretical sphere of the spiritual function*."[3] It can exist independently only so long as it is a religious attitude, that is, theonomous. When metaphysics ceases to be religious it becomes a pseudoscience and is justifiably rejected by science. As a religious attitude, metaphysics depends on the philosophy of religion for its own essence and categories.

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[1] *Ibid*., p. 330. [2] *Ibid*.

[3] *Ibid*., p. 302. See also p. 306, where Tillich states: "Metaphysics is the religious act in which the unconditioned is grasped in theoretical-rational symbols."

Theology is defined as "theonomous systematics."[1] It is, therefore, the normative element of the science of religion. The position of theology in the Middle Ages, Tillich thinks, can only be understood by means of the relation between autonomy and theonomy. Until the height of the Middle Ages theology was theonomous systematics and included autonomy within itself. With the collapse of the medieval spirit the unity of theonomy and autonomy was destroyed. "Theonomy became heteronomous and autonomy became rational."[2] Theology became a special science in addition to the autonomous sciences, and the result was the conflict between theology and science that has persisted until the present time.[3] In view of this situation, Tillich asserts: "The truth of theology depends upon the degree to which it dissolves itself as an independent science and unites itself with the autonomous systematics of normative science of spirit in general."[4]

Theology works out of the concrete spiritual process and is bound to the classical symbols in which theonomy found expression. Theology, therefore, must do two things: it must present the original substance of the religious documents in which theonomy achieved expression and it must communicate this substance in such a way that it is relevant to the contemporary mind.[1] The church is the community which creates religious symbols. It is theology's relationship to the concrete spiritual community that gives it a "confessional" character. The confessional character of theology belongs to it essentially as a normative science and "would not be absent even if humanity were united together in one confession."[2]

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[1] The System of the Sciences, p. 274.

[2] Ibid. [3] Ibid., pp. 274-275. [4] Ibid., pp. 275-276.

In theology, theonomous metaphysics is treated as "dogmatics." This word indicates that the symbols of theology are not subjective, but the authoritative expression of a community.[3] The most direct form of theonomous metaphysics is exhibited in the development of myths, but theonomous metaphysics achieves its most rational form in metaphysics which uses the symbols created by autonomous science.[4] Myth and metaphysics reflect the dialectic of being and thought, of content and form; myth represents the element of content and metaphysics the element of form. "The synthesis of myth and metaphysics is dogma, that is, the attempt to employ scientific concepts as theonomous symbols."[5] There is no theonomous attitude in art and science, and thus no theological aesthetics or theory of science. Theology does, however, select material from the autonomous realms of meaning for its own normative activity.[6]

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[1] Ibid., p. 276. Tillich's words concerning the task of theology are: "Daraus ergibt sich für sie die doppelte Aufgabe, den originalen Geist der religiösen Urkunden darzustellen und ihn in das gegenwärtige Bewusstsein zu überführen." Note the similarity between the conception of the theological task presented here and that given in S.T. I, p. 3.

[2] Ibid., p. 277.

[3] Ibid., p. 278. See also, "Philosophy of Religion," p. 352.

[4] Ibid., p. 279. [5] Ibid. [6] Ibid., pp. 279-280.

The works which have been examined in this chapter are significant, because in them is contained Tillich's early conception of the relation between religion, philosophy, and theology. Philosophy and theology are related as two elements of the one science of religion, or theonomous science of spirit. Of particular importance is Tillich's conception of the relation between culture and religion as a relation between form and content. For while his conceptions of philosophy, theology, and their relation are modified considerably in his later work, he has never abandoned the form-content view of the relation between culture and religion. This relation, moreover, is presupposed, as I shall argue later,[1] in Tillich's recent conception of the relation between philosophy and theology.

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[1] See Chapters IV and V, below.

CHAPTER III

PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY, CONCEIVED OF AS DIVERGENT DISCIPLINES, IN TILLICH'S RECENT THOUGHT

In the last chapter, it was observed that philosophy is defined by Tillich in his early period as "the study of the principles of meaning" and theology is conceived as "the study of the norms of meaning." Philosophy and theology are related in that they are two elements of the one theonomous science of spirit, or science of religion. These definitions are quite different from those familiar to readers of Tillich's works which have appeared since he came to this country in 1933. In this chapter, the basis of the conception of the relation between philosophy and theology developed mainly during the last three decades will be considered by examining the conceptions of "philosophy" and "theology" as they are elaborated in the works of this period. Before examining these concepts, however, a few things must be said by way of transition from Tillich's German to his American period.

Tillich's attempt to find a new answer to the question of the relation between philosophy and theology appears to have been prompted by at least two factors. First, the solution to the problem of the relation between philosophy and theology which he had worked out earlier depended for its realization upon the existence of a theonomous situation. Tillich came to realize, no doubt, that the existence of such a theonomous situation cannot merely be presupposed, and hence cannot serve as the foundation for the construction of a relation between philosophy and theology. Second, the work of the existentialist philosophers with which he had become acquainted in Germany suggested to him a new way of posing the problem and a new framework in which to set the answer. The validity of existentialist analysis was further impressed upon him by the catastrophic events which occured shortly thereafter, not only in terms of his own life, but in terms of the whole of Western, and especially European, culture.

These two factors require some comment. Tillich's attempt to elaborate a philosophy of religion that would not destroy what it seeks to comprehend was made with the realization that most philosophy of religion in the West has not, in fact, followed the principles he elaborated. Tillich himself expressed doubt that the philosophical concept of religion can be overcome, and wondered whether it is not man's fate to have to make a choice between religion and the philosophy of religion.[1] Tillich's attempt to find the way by which the philosophy of religion may perform its function without surrendering its own autonomy is based on his effort to lead the philosophical consciousness of his time toward a new theonomy such as he believed had existed in certain periods such as the Middle Ages.[2] It seems, however, that he became increasingly dubious that a new theonomous era was dawning. This does not mean that Tillich has abandoned his early views on theonomy and autonomy. On the contrary, these concepts continue to occupy a fundamental role in his thinking as is evident in the major work of his American period, the three volume Systematic Theology. What

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[1] "Overcoming the Concept of Religion," p. 377.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 385-386.

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he must have realized, however, was that the situation was much more complicated than he had previously recognized, and that his philosophy of religion rested for its success upon a theonomous awareness of the unconditioned, the presence of which could not be presumed in the minds of his contemporaries. One may say, therefore, that while Tillich did not change his mind substantially, he found that psychologically, the approach outlined in his philosophy of religion was inadequate for the present situation. Tillich does not say exactly when he became disenchanted with his earlier approach, but he indicates that he was already working toward a new solution by 1925. It was in 1925 that Tillich met Martin Heidegger who was then lecturing, as was Tillich, in Marburg. Referring to Heidegger's Marburg lectures, Tillich writes: "By the appearance of the so-called 'Existential Philosophy' in Germany, I was led to a new understanding of the relation between philosophy and theology."[1] Tillich was impressed not so much by the answers of the existential philosophers, as by the radical way in which they asked the questions of existence, the answers to which, in Tillich's view, are given by theology.[2]

Tillich never implies, however, that Heidegger's existential philosophy led him to change his own mind in any radical way. He indicates, rather, that he had already been prepared to accept existentialism, and refers specifically to Schelling's later peiod, Kierkegaard, and the philosophy of life.[3] Tillich has, moreover, always insisted that the answers to the questions implied in the analysis of existence cannot be derived from the human situation alone. It seems,

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[1] Interpretation of History, p. 39. [2] Ibid., p. 40.

[3] Ibid., p. 39.

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then, that existentialism did not so much change Tillich's basic views as suggest to him a new approach for communicating them. He adopted existentialism, it appears, to the extent that it was already congenial to his own thinking.[1] It provided or suggested to him a new language in which to pose the problem and work out a solution--one which would be more relevant to the situation and more meaningful to his audience.[2]

That Tillich was beginning to modify his conception of "philosophy" already prior to his departure from Germany is evident in a brief essay, "Philosophie, Begriff und Wesen," which appeared in 1930.[3] In this essay he no longer refers to philosophy as the study of the principles of meaning as he had done five years earlier, but speaks of phi-

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[1] This opinion is also expressed by G.F. Sommer, op. cit., pp. 46-49. This is not to say, however, that Heidegger and other existentialists have not influenced Tillich. On the contrary, their influence, and that of Heidegger particularly, is evident in much of Tillich's work. This will become more apparent in the following pages of this study. As examples of Heidegger's influence, one may cite Tillich's preoccupation with ontology as the question of being and his emphasis on human finitude. Tillich's concern with the question of being, evident in all of his recent works, is virtually absent in his earlier works. But the use to which he puts the Heideggerian concepts, and the answers which he gives to the question of being and the problem of human finitude, reflect much more a continuity with his own earlier views as molded by Schelling among others, than they indicate a decisive Heideggerian influence.

[2] The new language referred to leans heavily on such terms as "being," "finitude," "estrangement," and "anxiety." The language employed in Tillich's recent works shows a marked existentialist influence that is absent in his earlier works. It is this language which Tillich employs as a medium to convey to modern man his own particular interpretation of Christian philosophical theology. But, as Hamilton as pursuasively argued (op. cit., pp. 37-53), existentialist words do not necessarily imply existentialist thoughts.

[3] Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, eds. H. Gunkel and L. Zscharnak. Second edition. (Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1927-1932), IV (1930), pp. 1198-1204. Reprinted in Philosophie und Schicksal, pp. 15-22. References in this study are to the latter volume.

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losophy as asking the "radical question" or "die Frage nach der Frage."[1] Philosophy, he says, "is that attitude in which the specifically human possibility of questioning becomes intentional."[2] Tillich does not yet say that philosophy asks the question of being, but he appears to be heading in that direction.

In view of the fact that Tillich was working toward a new solution of the problem of the relation between philosophy and theology before he left Germany, the division made in this study between his German and American periods is not wholly accurate, and must be clarified. It is not suggested here that Tillich's change of approach in relating philosophy and theology is related either temporally or causally to his change of country. This change, however, provides a convenient point of division. This division, moreover, is at least partially justified by the fact that his new approach was not fully articulated until he had been in America for well over a decade.

The adoption of a new apologetic method, which later came to be called the "method of correlation," does involve, however, a significant change in the point of departure of Tillich's argument. He speaks less about "philosophy of religion" and more in terms of "systematic" or "philosophical theology."[3] He seems to have abandoned, that is, the attempt to mediate a new awarenss of the unconditioned from the ground of the philosophy of religion. This shift of ground may be attributed to Tillich's realization that he could not assume a theonomous awareness of the unconditioned in the contemporary mind and that an approach was thus required which did not start out from that point. Another reason for the shift from philosophy of religion to theology, however, may be the fact that for the greater part of his American period he held positions on theological faculties. In Germany, on the other hand, Tillich had held professorships in both philosophy and theology, at different times in various universities. Whatever the reason, however, Tillich regarded himself primarily as a theologian during his American period, although he continued to regard his work as philosophical as well as theological.

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[1] Ibid., p. 20. [2] Ibid., p. 16.

[3] The only major writing on the philosophy of religion during Tillich's American career is an article, "The Two Types of the Philosophy of Religion" which appeared in the Union Seminary Quarterly Review, May, 1946 (reprinted in Theology of Culture). His references to the philosophy of religion after this time are infrequent. In the entire Systematic Theology, for example, there are scarcely half a dozen references to philosophy of religion, and those serve mainly to indicate its inadequacies.

An important consequence of the fact that Tillich devoted his efforts primarily to theology during his later period is that while his work remains philosophical and significantly dominated by his philosophical outlook, philosophy as such is dealt with in a secondary way, always in the context of and in relation to, theology. There is, in Tillich, no complete system of philosophy with a fully developed and strictly argued metaphysics and epistemology, but rather an outline of these insofar as he views them as relevant to theology. Thus, philosophers are likely to feel dissatisfied with Tillich's work and to regard his philosophical position as insufficiently developed and argued. It is indeed regrettable that he did not develop his philosophy more fully and that he leaves many problems unclear; but any criticism of Tillich on this point should at least take into account the fact that Tillich's primary concern was to elaborate a systematic apologetic theology,[1] not an independent system of philosophy. The fact that his theological work draws much from philosophy and that he attempts to correlate theology with philosophy accounts for the interest many philosophers have shown in his work, although to be sure, this interest has often been of a rather critical kind. Tillich does provide, however, a conception of what philosophy is, its nature and function. It is his "conception of philosophy," rather than his solutions to particular philosophical problems, with which the present study is concerned.

The Conception of Philosophy

In contrast to the definition of philosophy given in his early works, Tillich has more recently defined philosophy as "*that cognitive approach to reality in which reality as such is the object*. Reality as such, or reality as a whole, is not the whole of reality; it is the structure which makes reality a whole and therefore a potential object **of knowledge**. Inquiring into the nature of reality as such means inquiring into those structures, categories, and concepts which are presupposed in the cognitive encounter with every realm of reality."[2]

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[1] "Apologetic theology," in Tillich's view, is "answering theology." It attempts to answer man's questions, in any given historical situation, with the conceptual tools provided by that situation without, however, compromising the content of the Christian faith. The presupposition of apologetic theology is that there is some common ground between those inside and those outside the sphere of Christian commitment, through which the Christian message can be mediated. With this presupposition, apologetic theology stands in opposition to "kerygmatic theology," which denies the existence of such a common ground while emphasizing the unchanging truth of the message. (*S.T.* I, pp. 6-7.)

[2] *S.T.* I, p. 18. Commenting on Tillich's attempt to give a definition of philosophy, J. Heywood Thomas writes: "The fact that he should be concerned to obtain a definition of philosophy is a clue as to the

To inquire into the nature of reality as such is, as he alternatively expresses his definition of philosophy, to ask the question of, or to inquire into the nature of, being. As this definition reveals, philosophy, in Tillich's view, is primarily "metaphysics," or, as he prefers to call it, "ontology."[1] Ontology, for Tillich, is not "speculative"--in the sense of trying to establish a world behind or beyond the one which we encounter in our experience--but is rather "an analysis of those structures of being which we encounter in every meeting with reality."[3] The emphasis here must be placed on "analysis" in order to

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method he considers appropriate in philosophy and reveals his belief that clarity is obtained by definition." (Paul Tillich: An Appraisal. Philadelphia: The Westmister Press, 1963, pp. 32-33.) In a similar vein, Dorothy M. Emmet suggests that rather than give a definition of philosophy, Tillich should "look quite specifically at what philosophers seem to be doing when they are trying their hardest to do their job." ("Epistemology and the Idea of Revelation," in Kegley and Bretall, eds., op. cit., p. 201.) J.H. Randall, Jr., on the other hand, believes that Tillich is confusing two different conceptions of philosophy in his definition: what he calls an Aristotelian and a Platonic conception. ("The Ontology of Paul Tillich," in Kegley and Bretall, eds., op. cit., pp. 139-140.)

[2] In his recent works, Tillich often avoids the term "metaphysics," claiming that "it conveys the misconception that ontology deals with transempirical realities, with a world behind the world, existing only in speculative imagination." (Biblical Religion, pp. 6-7.) In his article, "Relation of Metaphysics and Theology," (op. cit., pp. 57-63), however, he indicates his willingness to retain the word "metaphysics" provided that it can be kept from the connotation that brought it into disrepute. In this article, he distinguishes "metaphysics" and "ontology" in this way: both investigate the structure of being, but metaphysics also investigates structures less universal than being, like "nature," "man," and "history." These are not, strictly speaking, structures of being as such, and hence are not objects of ontology.

The role which Tillich assigns to ontology clearly depends on Heidegger, and his distinction between ontology and metaphysics reminds one of Heidegger's distinction between metaphysica generalis and metaphysica specialis (J. S. Churchill, trans., Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962, pp. 228-229.).

[3] S.T. I, p. 20.

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indicate that "one has to look at things as they are given, if one wants to discover the principles, the structures, and the nature of being as it is embodied in everything that is."[1] It is with ontology, then, that the philosopher must be primarily concerned. The other traditional branches of philosophy, such as epistemology, logic, and ethics, cannot exist independently from ontology; and even the most anti-ontological philosophies can never free themselves from an ontological basis.[2]

The structure of being and the categories and concepts which are used to describe this structure constitute the area of the philosopher's major concern. But the theologian, Tillich indicates, is also concerned with the structure of being and its categories.[3] In order to gain a more precise notion of what philosophy is, therefore, one must first look at how philosophy is distinguished from theology. Although both are concerned with "being," philosophy and theology must be distinguished at three important points: they differ as to cognitive attitude, the source of knowledge, and content.[4] Inasmuch as Tillich's conception of theology will be treated later in this chapter, the discussion here will concentrate on the philosophical side of these distinctions.

The Cognitive Attitude of the Philosopher

The cognitive attitude requisite for a philosophical analysis of

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[1] Biblical Religion, p. 8.

[2] For a discussion of the dependence of logic, epistemology, and ethics upon ontology, see S.T. I, pp. 19-20, 71ff. See also, Paul Tillich, Love, Power and Justice (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), passim.

[3] S.T. I, p. 21.

[4] Ibid., pp. 22-24.

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the structure of being is that of objectivity and detachment, whereas theology requires an attitude of commitment, passion, and love. As Tillich puts it: "Although driven by the philosophical eros, the philosopher tries to maintain a detached objectivity toward being and its structures. . . . His passion is the passion for a truth which is open to general approach, subject to general criticism, changeable in accordance with every new insight, open and communicable. In all these respects he feels no different from the scientist, historian, psychologist, etc."[1] The philosopher, impelled by the love of knowledge (the philosophical eros), attempts to give an objective description of the structure of being; he wants to find the universal elements which are constitutive for everything that is. He, like the scientist, is a detached investigator of a definite subject matter and aims to discover a body of truth which can be communicated to others. The difference between philosopher and scientist seems to be chiefly that the object of study of the former is more universal than that of the latter, indeed, the most universal study conceivable. For while the scientist attends to the generic qualities of beings, the philosopher seeks to find those elements common to everything that is simply by virtue of the fact that it is. In respect to his attitude, therefore, the philosopher resembles the scientist much more than the theologian. This contrast in attitude is viewed by Tillich as a fundamental distinction between philosophy and theology. Philosophy demands a scientific attitude rather than one of commitment. The philosopher, moreover, uses the material provided by the sciences for his own work;

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[1] Ibid., p. 22. In excluding commitment from philosophy, Tillich follows a particular trend in philosophy that might be labeled Aristotelian.

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he is, to that extent, dependent on the scientist.[1]

The description of the philosophical attitude as one of detachment is, however, qualified by Tillich. For although the philosopher strives to be objective and detached, as an existing person he is subject to all the conditions of existence. This means that he cannot be completely objective because he is conditioned by his psychological, sociological, and historical situation. It means further, however, that

> like every human being, he exists in the power of an ultimate concern, whether or not he is fully conscious of it, whether or not he admits it to himself and to others. There is no reason why even the most scientific philosopher should not admit it, for without an ultimate concern his philosophy would be lacking in passion, seriousness, and creativity. . . . Every creative philosopher . . . is a theologian in the degree to which his existential situation and his ultimate concern shape his philosophical vision.[2]

The above qualification is in one way an improvement over the original description of the philosophical attitude. For while "ultimate concern" may be too strong an expression, most philosophers would concede that objectivity and detachment are not wholly accurate descriptions of the philosophical attitude, and would agree that concern and involvement are not foreign to the philosopher. But while Tillich's description of the philosophical attitude gains in accuracy through the qualification, it now fails to make the distinction it was intended to make. Both philosopher and theologian, it now seems, share the attitude of involvement. And the distinction between philosopher and theologian is even further obliterated in the assertion that every creative philosopher is to a certain extent a theologian. This view will be examined in more detail later, but a recurrent difficulty in Tillich's conception of the relation between philosophy and theology should be noted here. Tillich vacillates between distinguishing them very sharply, unrealistically so, and obliterating the distinction altogether. Thus his distinction between the cognitive attitude of the philosopher and that of the theologian fails to provide a clear demarcation between the two realms. In view of the distinction and its subsequent qualification, it can be said merely that in theology the emphasis is on commitment whereas the emphasis in philosophy is on objectivity and detachment. The whole burden of the distinction between philosophy and theology does not, however, lie with the difference in cognitive attitude; for they are also distinguished, according to Tillich, by the source of their knowledge.

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[1] For a critique of Tillich's conception of the philosopher's relation to the scientist, see J. Heywood Thomas, op. cit., pp. 37-38.

[2] S.T. I, pp. 24-25.

The Source of Philosophical Knowledge

The source of the philosopher's knowledge is "pure reason" or the "universal *logos*," whereas the theologian's source is "the *logos* manifesting itself in a particular historical event."[1]

> The philosopher . . . tries to penetrate into the structure of being by means of the power of his cognitive function and its structures. He assumes . . . that there is an identity, or at least an analogy, between objective and subjective reason, between the *logos* of reality as a whole and the *logos* working in him. Therefore, this *logos* is common; every reasonable being participates in it, uses it in asking questions and criticising the answers received. There is no particular place to discover the structure of being; there is no particular place to stand to discover the categories of experience. The place to look is all places; the place to stand is no place at all; it is pure reason.[2]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 23. [2] *Ibid.*

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Reason, for Tillich, is "the structure of the mind which enables it to grasp and shape reality."[1] The ability of the mind to grasp and shape reality can only be accounted for, in his view, on the presupposition that both the human mind ("subjective reason") and reality ("objective reason") are rationally structured. It is this common rational or logos structure to which Tillich refers in remarks quoted above when he speaks of an "identity" or "analogy" between subjective and objective reason. This presupposition represents the permanent influence of Idealism on Tillich's thought and the idealistic element in his conception of philosophy;[2] it prevents him from being classified as an existentialist without qualification.

The functions of "grasping" and "shaping" reality are conceived as two inseparable aspects of the act of knowing. "We transform reality according to the way we see it, and we see reality according to the way we transform it."[3] In grasping reality, the mind penetrates "into the essential nature of a thing or an event;" in shaping reality the mind transforms a given material into "a living structure which has the power of being."[4] In both its subjective and objective structure, reason points to something which transcends it. This is called the "depth of reason;" it appears in both objective and subjective reason, but points beyond them.[5]

Reason as the identity of thought and being is not, however,

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[1] Ibid., p. 75.

[2] See Tillich's comment, Interpretation of History, p. 60.

[3] S.T. I, p. 76.

[4] Ibid. On this point, see Emmet, op. cit., p. 206.

[5] Ibid., pp. 79-80.

"actual reason" (reason, that is, as possessed by living human beings), but "essential" reason. Actual reason, or reason in existence, "moves through finite categories, through self-destructive conflicts, through ambiguities and through the quest for what is unambiguous, beyond conflict and beyond bondage to the categories."[1] Thus, the depth of reason is "hidden under the conditions of existence." As a result, reason in existence must express its depth in myth and cult which, by their very presence, betray reason as having "fallen" away from its essential structure, as having "lost immediate unity with its own depth."[2] Actual reason is finite and subject, therefore, to the conditions of existence. "It contradicts itself and is threatened with disruption and self-destruction."[3] The essential structure of reason, however, is never completely lost. If it were, "mind as well as reality would have been destroyed in the very moment of their coming into existence. In the actual life of reason essential and existential forces, forces of creation and forces of destruction, are united and disunited at the same time."[4] The transition from essential to actual reason is indicated through the use of the myth of a cosmic "fall." The notion of a universal "fall" is indispensable in Tillich's conception of philosophy; for if there were no disruption of the unity of thought and being, philosophy would be both unnecessary and impossible.[5] Both the mind that grasps and shapes reality and the reality that is grasped and shaped by the mind are, by their very existence as components of a sub-

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[1] Ibid., p. 81. [2] Ibid., p. 80. [3] Ibid., pp. 82-83.

[4] Ibid., p. 83.

[5] It is for this reason that the first ontological level, the self-world (or subject-object) structure of being, is called "the implicit condition of the ontological question" (S.T. I, p. 164).

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ject-object relation, evidence of the fall. It is impossible, in the final analysis, for Tillich to avoid the identification of "existence" with the "fall,"[1] although he insists that this is a misinterpretation of his thought.[2] His interpretation of existence in the light of the fall, reveals the influence of Plato, or perhaps more accurately, Plato as interpreted by Schelling, on Tillich's thought.[3]

Certain difficulties arise in connection with Tillich's conception of reason. First of all, his description of the philosopher's place as "pure reason" is questionable. He is surely correct in saying that there is no particular place where the philosopher must stand in

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[1] It is because Tillich identifies "existence" and the "fall" that he must insist that God does not exist, and that God precedes the subject-object dichotomy. For a discussion of Tillich's conception of the Fall, see Reinhold Niebuhr, "Biblical Thought and Ontological Speculation in Tillich's Theology" (Kegley and Bretall, eds., *op. cit.*, pp. 216-227).

Tillich's conception of "fallen existence" is not really similar to Heidegger's notion of "inauthentic existence." For Tillich, everything that exists is fallen simply by virtue of the fact that it exists. The state of innocence "prior" to the Fall is a state of potentiality, not of actual existence. As Tillich puts it: "'Adam before the Fall' and 'nature before the curse' are states of potentiality. They are not actual states. The actual state is that existence in which man finds himself along with the whole universe, and *there is no time in which this was otherwise*." (*S.T.* II, pp. 40-41. Italics mine.) While the Fall is cosmic and is not an event in time, Tillich holds man responsible for it; for only man "has finite freedom and because all dimensions of reality are united in him." (*Ibid.*, p. 40.) But this interpretation of the Fall presents many difficulties. Assuming that man was not the first existent, how can his finite freedom account for the Fall of those aspects of nature which preceded him? And what sense does it make to speak of man has having finite freedom prior to his own existence?

[2] See his "Reply to Interpretation and Criticism" (Kegley and Bretall, eds., *op. cit.*) pp. 342-344.

[3] See Schelling's 1804 essay, "Philosophie und Religion" (Manfred Schröter's edition of *Schellings Werke*, Munich, 1958; Vierter Hauptband, pp. 3-60), especially pp. 18-40. It is interesting to note that Schelling also appeals to Plato in support of his notion of the fall (p. 28). See also, Tillich, *S.T.* II, p. 22.

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order to discover the structure of being and the categories of experience. But this does not mean that when a philosopher does his work he is standing no place at all or that his place is "pure reason." Tillich is aware of this, for he often speaks of the fact that the philosopher is conditioned by the factors of his environment. Thus, his statement that the philosopher's place is pure reason is puzzling and seems to contradict his own notion of the "fatefulness" of philosophy.[1]

There is also a problem in Tillich's contrast between subjective and objective reason. The conception of objective reason is somewhat ambiguous, because it is not clear whether he means simply that reality in itself is rationally structured and that the mind must only discover this structure, or whether the coincidence between subjective and objective reason is due to the organization of the mind. Professor Emmet has expressed this difficulty well. She states in regard to Tillich's notion of objective reason:

> Sometimes it is used to mean what Tillich calls the logos of being; sometimes it appears to mean something more like the logical structure of organized knowledge, as distinct from "subjective reason," which is the conscious thinking of an individual mind. The "ontological reason" gives us the general logical structure of a "world;" and a "world" to Tillich is not the totality of all that exists, but an organized whole as related to a knowing self, that is, it is an interpretation from a center. . . . But in that case need "the correlation between subjective and objective reason" mean more than that (in Kant's phrase) "reason has insight into that which she herself constructed according to her own plan"? We may find a correlation because we have put it there.[2]

Bernard Martin has pointed out, moreover, that it is unclear whether Tillich regards the correlation of subjective and objective reason as

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[1] See Tillich's article, "Philosophy and Fate," in The Protestant Era, pp. 3-15.

[2] Op. cit., p. 208.

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a characteristic only of reason in essence or also of reason in existence. He observes that the general thrust of Tillich's thought indicates that he believes with Kant that existential reason cannot grasp ultimate reality.[1] In reply to Professor Martin, it may be said, however, that Tillich does regard the correlation as true also of reason in existence, at least partially. And this does not necessarily indicate an inconsistency on his part, because Tillich does not regard the ontological structure of reality as "ultimate reality." Thus, there is no contradiction in saying that reason in existence is estranged from its depths, but yet can know the rational structure of reality.

There is also a question concerning the meaning of the "depth of reason." Some philosophers have asked whether this is not merely an elegant phrase for the often recognized fact that reality seems to be inexhaustible and never fully comprehended by man.[2] But as Miss Emmet has pointed out, Tillich seems to mean much more than this. Among other things, he seems to mean that there is "a quest for perfection in reason which could only be achieved in an intuitive union with reality. Tillich holds that 'essentially' this should be possible; reason and reality should be one. But under the conditions of human knowledge we cannot have this scientia intuitiva."[3]

The Content of Philosophy

The third way in which philosophy and theology are distinguished is according to their respective contents. Tillich claims that even

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[1] The Existentialist Theology of Paul Tillich (New Haven: College & University Press, 1964), p. 70.

[2] Ibid., p. 71. [3] Op. cit., p. 205.

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when theology and philosophy are talking about the same thing, they are really speaking about something different. Philosophy "deals with the categories of being in relation to the material which is structured by them;" philosophical assertions have, therefore, a "cosmological structure." The assertions of theology, by contrast, have a "soteriological character;" the same categories of being, that is, are related by theology to the quest for a "new being."[1] The divergent manner in which philosophy and theology handle the categories of being is stated thus:

> He [the philosopher] deals with causality as it appears in physics or psychology; he analyses biological or historical time; he discusses astronomical as well as microcosmic space. He describes the epistemological subject and the relation of person and community. He presents the characteristics of life and spirit in their dependence on, and independence of, each other. . . . The theologian, on the other hand, . . . discusses causality in relation to a prima causa, the ground of the whole series of causes and effects; he deals with time in relation to eternity, with space in relation to man's existential homelessness. He speaks of the self-estrangement of the subject, about the spiritual center of personal life, and about community as a possible embodiment of the "New Being."[2]

Another way in which Tillich puts the distinction between philosophy and theology in regard to content, is that philosophy is concerned with the structure of being as it is in itself, while theology deals with what being means for us.[3]

Because philosophy aims to describe the structure of being as it is in itself, the cognitive attitude of the philosopher must be primarily one of objective detachment. The philosopher attempts to describe a structure which is objectively given; as a philosopher, he is not concerned with the meaning of being any more than the scientist qua scientist is concerned with the meaning of the aspects of being which

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[1] S.T. I, p. 24. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid., p. 22.

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he studies. The philosopher is aided in his objective pursuit of truth by the fact that he, unlike the theologian, need not be committed to, or limited by, the particular, concrete logos. The philosopher is informed by the universal logos, the logos which is shared by all rational creatures. By means of his cognitive attitude and source of knowledge, the philosopher is enabled to describe the structure of being as such.

But this account of philosophy is onesided; for, as Tillich has already said, while attempting to be detached, the philosopher also finds himself involved. While searching for truth in the light of the universal logos alone, the philosopher as an existing person is limited and conditioned by particular situations. Although he searches for being, he constantly encounters non-being. The "essentialist" conception of philosophy is inadequate because it fails to deal with man's own finitude. The chief mark of the state of existence, for Tillich, is "finitude;" and finitude is, above all, an indication of "non-being." Thus, while the philosopher is concerned with the description of being, such a description cannot be undertaken without an understanding of non-being; for non-being characterizes not only the philosopher's own state as an existing person, but also everything that exists.

Any discussion of being, Tillich insists, involves treatment of non-being.[1] Non-being should not be conceived as the absolute opposite

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[1] Ibid., pp. 186-189. For a critique of Tillich's concept of "non-being," see Elmer Sprague, "On Professor Tillich's Ontological Question" International Philosophical Quarterly, II (1962), pp. 81-87. Sprague maintains that to ask what kind of being must be attributed to non-being, as Tillich does, is as senselss as asking "how long non-yards are" (p. 83.). On the same subject, see Sidney Hook, The Quest for Being (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1961), p. 148. Hook argues that "non-being" is a psychological, not an ontological, category. These criticisms will be examined in Chapter V.

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of being, but must be understood "dialectically" as in the Greek expression, "me on." "Ouk on is the 'nothing' which has no relation at all to being; me on is the 'nothing' which has relation to being."[1] Tillich appeals to the authority of Plato for his conception of non-being, but his interpretation of that concept appears to have been influenced also by Schelling, for whom "non-being" is also of primary significance.[2] Tillich states the nature of non-being and its relation to being thus:

> Nonbeing appears as the "not yet" of being and as the "no more" of being. It confronts that which is with a definite end. This is true of everything except being-itself--which is not a "thing." As the power of being, being-itself cannot have a beginning and an end. Otherwise it should have arisen out of nonbeing. But nonbeing is literally nothing except in relation to being. Being precedes nonbeing in ontological validity, as the word "nonbeing" itself indicates. . . . However, everything which participates in the power of being is "mixed" with nonbeing. It is being in process of coming from and going toward nonbeing. It is finite.[3]

When Tillich says that it is the function of philosophy to examine being as being, or somewhat less misleadingly, the structure of being, it should be kept in mind that being as the object of philosophy is not some kind of pure essence, but the structure of being as manifested in the existential order. It is for this reason that the exposition of the content of philosophy must begin with a discussion of non-being. The structure of being investigated by the philosopher is the being "mixed" with non-being of existence. It is for the same reason that Tillich can refer to the ontological task of philosophy as

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[1] Ibid., p. 188. Compare Plato's discussion of non-being in the Sophist (258-259), to which Tillich often appeals.

[2] For a discussion of the influence of Schelling's conception of "non-being" on Tillich, see Sommer, op. cit., pp. 44, 79-86.

[3] S.T. I, p. 189.

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"existential" analysis.

The various levels of ontological concepts employed by Tillich can now be examined. Tillich does not pretend to give a complete ontological scheme, but rather deals with the aspects of an ontology which he takes to be most theologically significant. Ontology is possible, according to Tillich, because "there are concepts less universal than being but more universal than any . . . concept designating a realm of beings."[1] These concepts have usually been called "principles" or "categories." The ontological concepts are strictly a priori in the sense that they are presupposed in every actual experience because they constitute the very structure of experience. This does not imply, however, that they are epistemologically a priori. Moreover, while the ontological concepts are a priori in that they constitute the structure of experience, Tillich does not view them as necessarily static, unchangeable, or eternally valid. "The structure of experience," he says, "may have changed in the past and may change in the future. . . . The conditions of experience are a priori. If these conditions change--and with them the structure of experience--another set of conditions must make it possible to have experience."[2]

Tillich distinguishes four levels of ontological concepts. The first is "the basic ontological structure which is the implicit condition of the ontological question."[3] The ontological structure implied in this question is the "subject-object structure of being, which in turn presupposes the self-world structure as the basic articulation of being."[4] The analysis of this dialectical structure is the first task of ontology. "Selfhood," Tillich claims, must be attributed to all living being, and, by analogy, to all inorganic objects.[1] Only man, however, is a completely developed and centered self; he is self-conscious and thus "possesses" himself. Although man is in the world, he is also separated from it. He can look at the world and act upon it as an object. One can say, therefore, that man *has* a world. The "world" which man possesses is not the sum total of all being, but "a structure of a unity of manifoldness."[2]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 164. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 166. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 164.

[4] *Ibid.*

The subject-object structure of reason is based on the self-world polarity. The world as a structured whole and the self as a structure of centeredness are interdependent; and reason is the source of this mutual relationship. "Without reason, without the *logos* of being, being would be chaos, that is, it would not be being but only the possibility of it (*me on*). But where there is reason there are a self and a world in interdependence. The function of the self in which it actualizes its rational structure is the mind, the bearer of subjective reason. Looked at by the mind, the world is reality, the bearer of objective reason."[3]

The second level is the "elements" which make up the ontological structure and which "share the polar character of the basic structure."[4]

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[1] Tillich also attributes "life" to the inorganic realm. See *S.T.* III (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 34.

[2] *S.T.* I, p. 170. The notion that man *has* a world and that the self-world structure is fundamental for ontology stems from Heidegger. See his *Being and Time*, Macquarrie and Robinson, trans. (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 33.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 172. For a critical comment on the notion of "objective reason," see Emmet, *op. cit.*, p. 208, and Martin, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 165.

Tillich does not attempt to present an exhaustive classification of these, but mentions three important pairs: individuality and universality, dynamics and form, freedom and destiny. In each of these three polarities, "the first element expresses the self-relatedness of being, its power of being something for itself, while the second element expresses the belongingness of being, its character of being a part of a universe of being."[1]

The polar character of the ontological elements leaves them open to the threat of non-being, for each member of a polarity is limited as well as upheld by the other one. If either polar element is lost, the polarity itself, and hence the ontological structure, is destroyed. Thus for example, "self-relatedness produces the threat of a loneliness in which world and communion are lost," while participation in the world "produces the threat of a complete collectivization" and a "loss of individuality" and consequently a loss of self-relatedness.[2]

The third level considers "the characteristics of being which are the conditions of existence"[3] and "the difference between essential and existential being."[4] No ontology, Tillich believes, can avoid the distinction between essential and existential being, for "whenever the ideal is held against the real, truth against error, good against evil, a distortion of essential being is presupposed and is judged by essential being."[5] As Tillich sees it, the basic condition of existence is freedom united with finitude. The task of ontology on

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[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid., pp. 198-199. [3] Ibid., p. 164.

[4] Ibid., p. 165. [5] Ibid., p. 202.

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this level, therefore, is to analyze finitude and its relation to freedom and destiny.[1]

The fourth level of ontological concepts comprises the "categories of being and knowing."[2] The most important of these are: time, space, causality, and substance.[3] The categories are the "forms in which the mind grasps and shapes reality."[4] They are present in everything that is, and they determine the content as well as the logical form of discourse. The categories are related both to being and nonbeing. "They express being, but at the same time they express the nonbeing to which everything that is, is subject. The categories are forms of finitude. . . ."[5]

This view of the categories can be illustrated by considering what Tillich says about "space." "To be," Tillich says, "means to have space" and "not to have space is not to be."[6] Every being, therefore, attempts to get and keep space for itself, and not merely space as physical location, although this is primary, but also social space.

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[1] Ibid., p. 165. The emphasis which Tillich places on finitude in his treatment of the ontological structure of being is reminiscent of Heidegger's Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics.

[2] Ibid., p. 164.

[3] Ibid., p. 166. Tillich omits discussion of categories like "quantity" and "quality" because they have, in his view, no direct theological significance. His inclusion of "time" and "space" among the categories, moreover, is a departure from the Kantian scheme which views them as forms of intuition. Movement and rest, and unity and plurality, which are often regarded as categories belong, Tillich believes, on the level of the elements of the ontological structure because of their polar character. The scholastic transcendentals, the true and the good, "do not belong to pure ontology, because they are meaningful only in relation to a judging subject."

[4] Ibid., p. 192. [5] Ibid., pp. 192-193.

[6] Ibid., p. 194.

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Striving for space in all areas of life is, for Tillich, an "ontological necessity," a consequence of the fact that finite being is spatial. Space is related to non-being in that finite beings do not securely possess a definite place. As Tillich puts it: "There is no necessary relationship between any place and the being which has provided this space for itself. Finitude means having no definite place, it means having to lose every place finally and, with it, to lose being itself."[1]

The Necessity and Limit of Philosophy

Philosophy has been defined as the study of the structure of being and its categories. It must now be asked what it is that prompts such a study. It is not at all obvious, that is, why certain people should be interested in devoting themselves to such a study. The question is even more puzzling in connection with Tillich's conception of philosophy, for he does not view philosophy as an esoteric undertaking engaged in only by a minority of intellectuals who call themselves professional philosophers. He believes, rather, that philosophy is a vital concern for all men. "Philosophy . . . is not a matter of liking or disliking. It is a matter of man as man, for man is that being who asks the question of being. Therefore, every human being philosophizes. . . . Man is by nature a philosopher. . . ."[2] One may now ask why this should be the case. Why should anyone (not to say, everyone) be interested in describing the structure of being? Tillich's view is that man's concern with being is accounted for by the fact

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[1] _Ibid_., p. 195.

[2] _Biblical Religion_, pp. 8-9. Tillich's notion that man is essentially a philosopher may well depend on Heidegger. See _Being and Time_, pp. 27, 32.

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that man both belongs to and is estranged from being. He says, for example, that to ask a question implies that "we do not have that for which we ask. If we had it, we would not ask for it. But, in order to be able to ask for something, we must have it partially; otherwise it could not be the object of a question. . . . If man is that being who asks the question of being, he has and has not the being for which he asks. He is separated from it while belonging to it."[1] Elsewhere, he states, "The passion of knowing for the sake of knowing . . . indicates that a want, a vacuum, is filled by successful cognition. Something which was strange, but which nevertheless belongs to us, has become familiar, a part of us."[2] Again, he says: "Knowing is a form of union. In every act of knowledge the knower and that which is known are united; and the gap between subject and object is overcome. . . . But the union of knowledge is a peculiar one; it is a union through separation. Detachment is the condition of cognitive union. . . ."[3]

The love of knowledge, then, which constitutes philosophy is not merely a passion for facts or information; it is a desire to be united with, and to participate in, the object of knowledge, and so to close the gap between subject and object. To present day modes of thinking, it is surely strange to consider knowing, in the ordinary sense of that term, as a kind of participation. It is clear, however, that this intepretation of the knowing process is very useful for Tillich's purposes, especially when he talks about "being" and "God." The quest for knowledge of being is not, in the final analysis, a search for information about the structure of being and its categories, but a desire for union with being-itself. Moreover, since being-itself and God are identical, for Tillich, the philosophical quest for being takes on quite definite religious overtones. This does not mean, however, that the quest for union dominates all kinds of knowledge. "The element of union and the element of detachment appear in different proportions in the different realms of knowledge."[1] Thus, the structure of being must be described by the philosopher with a prevailing attitude of detachment. What is important, however, is that man's concern to describe the structure of being is motivated ultimately by his concern about his estrangement from being-itself. Man is concerned about his separation from the ground and power of his being because he is finite; and this means that his being is limited and threatened by non-being. As Tillich puts it,

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[1] Ibid., p. 11. [2] S.T. I, p. 95.

[3] Ibid., p. 94.

> Our power of being is limited. We are a mixture of being and non-being. This is precisely what is meant when we say that we are finite. It is man in his finitude who asks the question of being. He who is infinite does not ask the question of being, for, as infinite, he has the complete power of being. . . . And a being which does not realize that it is finite . . . cannot ask, because it cannot go beyond itself and its limits. But man can and must ask; he cannot avoid asking, because he belongs to the power of being from which he is separated, and he knows both that he belongs to it and that he is separated from it.[2]

The philosopher's desire to describe the structure of being, Tillich seems to be saying, is motivated by his concern, whether or not he is fully conscious of it, with being-itself. If this interpretation of Tillich's position is correct, then it is important to ascertain the relationship between the concepts "structure of being" and "being-itself." Tillich uses a variety of phrases, all containing

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 97. [2] *Biblical Religion*, pp. 11-12.

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the word "being," without clearly indicating how they are to be distinguished from one another--if indeed, they are meant to have distinct meanings. Because of a lack of clear direction in this matter, the reader of Tillich may be inclined to assume that such phrases as, for example, "structure of being" and "being-itself" are meant to be synonymous. The reader's inclination is strengthened when he is told, alternatively, that the philosopher is occupied with the description of the structure of being, that the philosopher asks the question of being, of being itself, or of being as such. It seems to me, however, to be a mistake to construe "structure of being" and "being-itself" as identical or synonymous. The phrase "structure of being" is typically used by Tillich to designate those elements which are constitutive of everything that is, the knowledge of which universal elements, then, amounts to knowledge of what "is" means, or what it means "to be."[1] "Being-itself," on the other hand, is most appropriately and frequently used within Tillich's system to refer to "God;"[2] it is, in fact, the only non-symbolic predicate which can be ascribed to God.[3] As a name of God, "being-itself" is roughly synony-

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[1] See, for example, S.T. I, pp. 18, 20, 163-164, 239; Biblical Religion, pp. 6-8; and Love, Power, and Justice, p. 19.

[2] See S.T. I, pp. 205, 235-241. Tillich does, however, sometimes speak of "being itself" as the question of philosophy, as in The Protestant Era, p. 85; S.T. I, p. 230; Biblical Religion, p. 13; Love, Power, and Justice, pp. 18, 21, 23. In some of these contexts, Tillich appears to be using "being itself" as a synonym of "structure of being." In others, however, he seems to be ignoring his own distinction between the philosophical and theological questions of being.

[3] S.T. I, pp. 238-239. In S.T. II (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957) pp. 9-10, however, this view is qualified. Here Tillich states that the only nonsymbolic assertion which can be made about God is the statement that everything said about God is symbolic. The statement that God is being-itself is "the boundary line at which both the symbolic and the non-symbolic coincide."

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mous with such expressions as "ground of being" and "power of being" (although these, according to Tillich, are symbolic). Nevertheless, "being-itself" and the "structure of being" are not unrelated; the structure of being is rooted in, though not identical with, being-itself.[1] Being-itself cannot, it would seem, be identical with the structure of being, because being-itself (or God) precedes the subject-object structure of everything that is, while the subject-object structure is the basic characteristic of the structure of being. This, it seems to me, is Tillich's basic position on the relation of these two concepts.

On the other hand, it must be admitted that he is often careless with these terms, and does not consistently distinguish them as clearly as I have tried to do. At other times, it seems that Tillich is consciously and deliberately obliterating the distinction. He says, for example: "Since God is the ground of being, he is the ground of the structure of being. He is not subject to this structure; the structure is grounded in him."[2] Here is perhaps Tillich's clearest statement of the distinction I have just made. But the sentences just quoted are followed immediately by: "He _is_ this structure, and it is impossible to speak about him except in terms of this structure. God must be approached cognitively through the structural elements of being-itself." I must confess that I find these remarks baffling. If God is the ground of the structure of being, he cannot be that structure itself. There can be little objection to his saying that God

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[1] "Reply to Interpretation and Criticism" (Kegley and Bretall, eds., _op. cit._), p. 335.

[2] _S.T._ I, p. 238.

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must be approached cognitively through the structure of being, for there may be no other avenue of approach; but to say that God must be approached through the structural elements of being-itself confuses the issue again. For if being-itself is another word for God, then the sentence last quoted states that God must be approached through the structural elements of God; and this is circular besides suggesting that God is composed of certain structural elements.[1] Tillich is much too careless, it seems to me, in the use of his phrases containing "being;" and the distinction between "structure of being" and "being-itself" must be maintained in order to avoid a complete identification of philosophy and theology.

There is also ambiguity in Tillich's alternative characterizations of philosophy as describing the structure of being and asking the question of being. The phrase, "ask the question of being," is a very strange one; and it is not at all clear what is meant by it. On the one hand, Tillich maintains that it is the task of philosophy to describe the structure of being; on the other hand, he maintains that "every human being philosophizes"[2] and that "man is by nature a philosopher, because he inescapably asks the question of being."[3] One might assume that asking the question of being and describing the

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[1] Tillich admits that he has not always distinguished "structure of being" and "being-itself" sharply enough and that these should be distinguished. (See his "Reply," op. cit., p. 335.) Here, however, it is most unfortunate that he uses the phrase "being-as-such" instead of "being-itself." It is unfortunate because it is the much more frequently employed phrase "being-itself" which needs, above all, to be distinguished from the "structure of being." Moreover, he immediately follows his admission with some remarks about "being-itself" as a philosophical concept which further obscure, rather than clarify, this distinction.

[2] Biblical Religion, p. 8.

[3] Ibid., p. 9.

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structure of being mean the same thing. But even assuming that what philosophers attempt to do is to describe the structure of being, Tillich surely cannot believe that this is what everyone does. It is virtually certain that the idea of describing the structure of being in terms of its elements and categories never even occurs to most people. Yet, Tillich insists that everyone asks the question of being. Ambiguities such as this one have led some critics to suggest that Tillich has more than one conception of philosophy.[1] While it may be too strong a judgment to say that Tillich confuses two conceptions of philosophy, it surely can be said that he does not draw the line carefully enough between "being" as a philosophical concept and "being" as the object of religious aspiration.[2] Thus, for example, when Tillich says that man by nature asks the question of being, the reason given is that man is aware that he both belongs to and is separated from being, that he is finite, a mixture of being and non-being. Now, in this context, it seems clear that the concern for being which man presumably has, is a "religious" concern--religious, that is, in Tillich's sense of that term, in that it reflects man's concern for the meaning of his being. But it is still not clear what the concern of all men with being in this sense (assuming for the present that all men do have this concern) has to do with the philosopher's attempt to describe the elements and categories that make up the structure of being.

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[1] J. H. Randall, Jr. (op. cit., pp. 139-140) suggests that Tillich identifies two different conceptions of philosophy, one related to an Aristotelian ontological inquiry, and the other more akin to the religious aspiration in Neo-Platonism and German Idealism.

[2] Insofar as Randall (ibid.) has pointed this out, his criticism is surely justified and pertinent.

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A more thorough analysis of the relation between the philosophical and religious concepts of being must be postponed until after the relation between philosophy and theology has been considered.[1] As a partial and provisional answer, it may perhaps be said that the key to the solution of this difficulty lies in Tillich's apparent view, mentioned earlier, that the philosophical attempt to describe the structure of being is motivated ultimately by the philosopher's concern (which he shares with all men) about his ambiguous (belongs to, but yet estranged from) relation to being-itself, the ground and power of being. Philosophy, therefore, arises out of a religious need. Tillich does not always state that view quite so candidly, but his thought consistently points in that direction. At one point, he goes so far as to say that the philosophical description of the structure of being requires a revelatory experience of being-itself. "Religion deals existentially with the meaning of being; philosophy deals theoretically with the structure of being. But religion can express itself only through the ontological elements and categories with which philosophy deals, while philosophy can discover the structure of being only to the degree to which being-itself has become manifest in an existential experience."[2]

Being-itself, for Tillich, is a necessary concept for every philosophy, but it is also a limiting concept: it is "that beyond which thought cannot go."[3] He also refers to the concept "being-itself" as

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[1] See Chapters IV and V, below, for further discussion of this point.

[2] S.T. I, p. 230. See also, "The Problem of Theological Method," The Journal of Religion, XXVII (January, 1947), p. 17: "No creative philosophy can escape its religious background."

[3] Ibid. See also Tillich's "Reply to Interpretation and Criticism," op. cit., p. 335.

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the point at which there is both a basic identity and a divergence between philosophy and theology.[1] Philosophy can and does describe the basic categories of being, but when the philosopher's treatment of being takes on the character of an ultimate concern or a concern with the meaning of his being, then he cannot as a philosopher answer his questions, but must either turn to the theologian or become a theologian himself.[2]

The Conception of Theology

Taken in its broadest sense, "theology" means reasoning about God and divine things.[3] In this sense, Tillich quite properly observes, theology is as old as religion. As soon as religion is reflected upon, there is, to some degree at least, theology. "Every myth," says Tillich, "contains a theological thought which can be, and often has been, made explicit."[4] Theology, therefore, is no possession or function peculiar to the Christian religion. The exclusiveness of the Christian religion is not based on the claim that there is no other theology or religion, but on the claim that it alone is the true religion and hence the only basis for a true theology. In this sense, Christian theology claims to be the theology, or as Tillich prefers to put it, "the idea of theology is fulfilled in Christian theology in a final and perfect way."[5] However, if the claim of Christian theology is to be more than an expression of the faith of

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[1] "Reply to Interpretation and Criticism," pp. 335-336.

[2] Ibid. See also "Philosophy and Theology" in The Protestant Era, pp. 88-89.

[3] S.T. I, p. 15. [4] Ibid., p. 16. [5] Ibid., p. 15.

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theologians who work within the theological circle of Christian commitment, it must be shown that the Christian claim has validity beyond that circle. This is the task of apologetic theology which must indicate that "trends which are immanent in all religions and cultures move toward the Christian answer."[1]

The Criteria of Theology

The broad definition of theology given above is narrowed considerably, however, in Tillich's discussion of the criteria of every theology. Tillich formulates two formal criteria which every theology must satisfy and which, he believes, are "derived from the whole of the Christian message."[2] But if this is the case, one may then object that any attempt to argue that Christian theology is the theology on the ground that it most adequately satisfies these criteria will be circular; for the criteria themselves are drawn from the Christian message. Tillich is aware of this difficulty, but believes it is an unavoidable accompaniment of the requirement that the theologian's attitude must be one of commitment, of belonging to a theological circle. The difficulty can be overcome only to the extent that the apologetic theologian succeeds in showing that his point of view has validity for those outside his circle.

The first criterion of theology is stated thus: "The object of theology is what concerns us ultimately. Only those propositions are theological which deal with their object so far as it can become a matter of ultimate concern for us."[3] This criterion appears to have little relevance to the general definition which Tillich gives of theology; for if theology is reasoning about God, then any proposition about God may qualify as "theological." Perhaps Tillich means to say that the criterion is for the theological correctness of a proposition rather than its theological character as such. He is not, however, clear about this. The first criterion, however, is compatible with Tillich's belief that religion is a matter of ultimate concern; since, moreover, theology is a function of religion, the statements of theology must reflect this essential characteristic of religion.

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[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid., p. 11.

[3] Ibid., p. 12. See also, "The Problem of Theological Method," op. cit., p. 17.

> The word "concern" points to the "existential" character of religious experience. We cannot speak adequately of the "object of religion" without simultaneously removing its character as an object. That which is ultimate gives itself only to the attitude of ultimate concern. It is the correlate of an unconditional concern but not a "highest thing" . . . about which we could argue in detached objectivity. . . . Of course, in every concern there is _something_ about which one is concerned; but this something should not appear as a separated object which could be known and handled without concern.[1]

But one may ask why this is so. It is clear that if religion is what concerns us ultimately, theology must deal with its object insofar as it is a matter of ultimate concern. But it is less clear why the theologian's attitude must be that of ultimate concern and why this "object" cannot be discussed with detached objectivity and can never be separated from this concern. Cannot one reason with some detachment about the object of ultimate concern? Tillich believes that one cannot and this negative verdict indicates that he takes theology to be "existential" rather than "speculative." It must, that is, always be related to man's concern, and may never pass into a purely theoretical

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[1] _Ibid_.

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discussion about the existence and nature of God.[1]

Tillich intends the first criterion of theology to be formal and general. It says nothing about the content of theological propositions; it makes, that is, no reference to what does concern us ultimately. Its purpose is to guard the boundary between ultimate and preliminary concerns, thus protecting both theology and the other areas of culture from unwarranted mutual intrusion. The theologian's proper domain is "the situation of ultimate concern."[2] He should make no judgments, therefore, about scientific theories; conversely, experts in the various fields of science and culture are not qualified to make theological judgments.

The second formal criterion of theology deals with the content of our ultimate concern, and is said to be "derived from an analysis of the concept 'ultimate concern'"[3] It reads: "Our ultimate concern is that which determines our being or not-being. Only those statements are theological which deal with their object insofar as it can become a matter of being or not-being for us."[4] Put another way, "Nothing can be of ultimate concern for us which does not have the power of threatening and saving our being."[5] By "our being" in this context, Tillich does not mean merely "existence in space and time," but "the whole of

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[1] During a discussion on God's eternity, Tillich was asked whether God was in any sense better because estrangement has been overcome. In his answer he states: "I try, not always successfully, to avoid statements about the divine nature which transcend the merely relational, the 'for us.' A question such as: 'Is God in any valuational sense better because estrangement has been overcome?' would produce anxiety in me." Sydney and Beatrice Rome, eds., Philosophical Interrogations (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), pp. 377-378.

[2] S.T. I, p. 12. [3] Ibid., p. 14. [4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid. See also, "The Problem of Theological Method," op. cit., p. 18.

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human reality, the structure, the meaning, and the aim of existence."[1] The threat, as Tillich sees it, is not primarily that our spatio-temporal existence is precarious, but meaninglessness. We are concerned ultimately about that which can threaten or save the meaning of our being.

It should be observed that the second criterion seems to claim not merely that what has the power of threatening and saving our being is the proper object of our ultimate concern (what we ought to be ultimately concerned about), but that this is in fact what does concern man ultimately. Now this is a strange claim when one considers the distinction which Tillich makes in his discussion of the first criterion between "ultimate" and "preliminary" concerns. He admits that men have many concerns, for example, personal, political, and economical. Concerns other than "that which determines our being and not-being" are called preliminary concerns. These concerns, according to Tillich, are properly the "bearers and vehicles" of ultimate concern. But it is possible to elevate preliminary concerns to ultimacy and such elevation is termed "idolatry."[2] Thus, it would seem that Tillich cannot literally mean that only what determines our being or not-being can concern us ultimately; for if this were true, then idolatry would be no problem, and indeed, the work of the theologian would be entirely superfluous. But Tillich has always recognized idolatry (in his sense) as a prevalent problem. Perhaps he means to say that

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid., p. 13. For a critical discussion of Tillich's conception of idolatry, see William Alston, "Tillich on Idolatry," The Journal of Religion, XXXVIII (October, 1958), pp. 263-267.

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all ultimate concern is directed to what the one who has the concern takes to be that which determines his being or not-being, but that in cases of idolatry this concern is misguided. He is not, however, clear on this point. Two problems of interpretation thus arise in connection with the theory of ultimate concern: first, does Tillich think that all men are ultimately concerned; and second, if so, are they all ultimately concerned about what determines their being or not-being? The answer to the first question is affirmative. Tillich always speaks as if ultimate concern is something shared by all men.[1] But how does he know? Not even a universal survey would provide an answer, because Tillich has often indicated that one may not necessarily be conscious of his ultimate concern. Unless, however, Tillich means to define man in terms of ultimate concern in such a way as to stipulate that the proposition "Man is the being that has ultimate concern" is analytically true, the contention that all men are ultimately concerned surely requires some empirical evidence. Tillich's answer to the second question is, as indicated above, less clear. However, if his thought is to be at all consistent, he must be interpreted as not claiming that all men are truly concerned about what determines their being, but that their ultimate concern is often misdirected. This interpretation is required to save the significance of the distinction between preliminary and ultimate concerns.

The second criterion does not, in Tillich's view designate any special content, but remains open for any content which can express "that which determines our being or not-being;" only contents devoid of this power are excluded from the theological realm. An ultimate concern can actualize itself through virtually any preliminary concern. Such things as, for example, poems, psychological insights, political programs, and personality problems are not in themselves objects of theology, but they can all become objects of theology "from the point of view of their power of expressing some aspects of that which concerns us ultimately."[1]

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[1] For specific statements of this view, see: S.T. I, p. 24; S.T. II, p. 9; Dynamics of Faith, pp. 126-127.

The discussion of the two formal criteria of theology has already touched upon two of the three main points of divergence by which Tillich distinguishes philosophy and theology from each other: the cognitive attitude of the theologian and the content of theology. The first criterion, dealing with ultimate concern, makes it impossible for the theologian to share the philosopher's objectivity and detachment. The second criterion indicates the content of theology: that which determines our being or not-being. Both of these require more comment. Also requiring discussion is the source of the theologian's knowledge, or the concept of "revelation." These topics will be taken up in an order parallel to that followed in the discussion of the conception of philosophy: first, the theological circle as determining the cognitive attitude of the theologian; second, revelation as the source of theological knowledge; and finally, the content of theology.

The Theological Circle

The theologian, unlike the philosopher, is not detached from his object. His passion is not for objective truth, but is "the love which

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[1] S.T. I, pp. 13-14. See also, "The Problem of Theological Method," op. cit., p. 18.

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accepts saving, and therefore, personal truth. The basic attitude of the theologian is commitment to the content he expounds. Detachment would be a denial of the very nature of this content. The attitude of the theologian is 'existential'."[1] The theologian is determined by his faith; he works, that is, within a "theological circle." This means, for Tillich, that there can be no empirical-inductive or metaphysical-deductive scientific theology. The theological circle also distinguishes the theologian from the philosopher of religion. "While the philosopher of religion tries to remain general and abstract in his concepts, as the concept 'religion' itself indicates, the theologian is consciously and by intention specific and concrete."[2] The theologian claims that the Christian message is universally valid in spite of its concrete and specific character.

The theologian, therefore, must be committed; "he must be in the situation of faith."[3] But here a problem arises for Tillich. He recognizes that the theologian, while committed, is nevertheless continuously plagued with doubts and that the theologian is often inclined to reject the Christian message. The criterion of the theological circle, Tillich says, demands only that the theologian "acknowledge the content of the theological circle as his ultimate concern."[4]

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[1] Ibid., p. 23. See also, "The Problem of Theological Method," p. 19.

[2] Ibid., p. 9. Compare "The Problem of Theological Method," p. 17: "The ultimate concern or the religious encounter with reality can be considered in two ways. It can be looked at as an event beside other events, to be observed and described in theoretical detachment; or it can be understood as an event in which he who considers it is 'existentially' involved. In the first case the philosopher of religion is at work, in the second the theologian speaks."

[3] Ibid., p. 10. [4] Ibid.

The Concept of Revelation

The source of the theologian's knowledge is not pure reason but the "Logos 'who became flesh,' that is, the logos manifesting itself in a particular historical event."[1] The concrete logos cannot be reached through rational detachment, but must be received through commitment. Tillich discusses at great length the sources, medium, and norm of theology, in addition to the doctrine of revelation itself. All of these, however, center around revelation, for as Tillich says: "Revelation is presupposed in all parts of the system as the ultimate source of the contents of the Christian faith."[2] Thus, after an examination of the sources, medium, and norm of theology, the discussion will turn to Tillich's conception of revelation.

There are, in Tillich's view, three primary sources of theology: Bible, church history, and the history of religion and culture. While rejecting the view of orthodox biblicists that the Bible is the only source of theology, Tillich maintains that it is the basic source because "it is the original document about the events on which the Christian church is founded," and contains "the original witness of those who participated in the revealing events."[3] The Bible may not, however, be regarded as a book containing revelation; for revelation requires "someone who receives it as revelation" and thus, "the act of reception is a part of the event itself."[4] The Bible, moreover, is an event in church history and the theologian who uses it is also using church history as a source. Finally, the biblical message can only be

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[1] Ibid., p. 23.

[2] Ibid., pp. 67-68.

[3] Ibid., p. 35.

[4] Ibid.

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understood in the light of the history of religion and culture which prepared for it.

The sources of theology are not objective sources in the sense of being readily available for public inspection. The sources become such only for one who participates in them, only that is, through "experience." Experience is not a source of theology, but the "medium" through which the sources are received.[1] The event on which theology is based "is given to experience and not derived from it," and this event constitutes the criterion of every religious experience.[2] As the medium of theology, experience is primarily receptive, not productive; if it were productive, it would become a source. Nevertheless, experience always transforms to some extent what it receives. The theologian must avoid the two extremes of repeating without transforming and transforming to such an extent that the result is a new production.[3]

Tillich's notion of experience raises certain problems. What, for example, is meant by saying that the sources of theology are "sources only for one who participates in them"?[4] There is, to be sure, a sense in which one could say that any source requires "participation." A book on American history, for example, is a source of information only for one who opens the cover, reads, and understands what he reads. If this is what Tillich means by "participation," he is of course entirely correct, although the point seems too obvious to have been belabored. But Tillich seems to want to mean more than this. He implies that the participation required of the theologian somehow

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[1] _Ibid_., p. 40. [2] _Ibid_., p. 46. [3] _Ibid_.

[4] _Ibid_., p. 40.

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distinguishes the theological enterprise from all others, thus rendering ordinary criteria of knowledge inapplicable. Theological sources are not objective, but can be grasped qua theological sources only through the experience of ultimacy. Something must happen to the subject in order for the source to be a source. This being so, however, it is difficult to see why experience does not become another source. It is also hard to see how the experience of revelation can be saved from mere subjectivity. The difficulty is compounded by Tillich's notion that experience is always both receptive and transformative. To say, as he does, that the theologian does not "intend" transformation, does not really help; to the extent that there is any transformation at all, experience must surely be a source.

Because of the diversity of the sources and "the indefiniteness of the mediating function of experience,"[1] theology requires a norm to serve as the criterion to which the sources and medium are subjected. Tillich views the problem of defining the norm of theology as a persistent struggle throughout church history.[2] The growth of norms is seen, however, as a historical process which is for the most part unconscious. The appearance and growth of a norm is a reflection of the spiritual life of the church. "It happens in and through the encounter of the church with the Christian message."[3] The norm of theology, Tillich believes, must be formulated in terms of the two poles which form the basis of theology: message and situation; it must have a dogmatic and an apologetic side. The norm as Tillich formulates it is: "the New Being in Jesus as the Christ as our ultimate concern."[4]

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[1] Ibid., p. 47. [2] Ibid., pp. 47-52.

[3] Ibid., p. 48. [4] Ibid., p. 50.

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This formulation embodies the eternal message in that it accepts "the ancient Christian baptismal confession of Jesus as the Christ;"[1] it is apologetically adequate to the present situation because of the prevalent experience of meaninglessness and despair in all realms of life as is made evident in the cultural creations of the time. The question, therefore, which arises out of our contemporary existence is

> the question of a reality in which the self-estrangement of our existence is overcome, a reality of reconciliation and reunion of creativity, meaning, and hope. We shall call such a reality the "New Being," a term whose presuppositions and implications can be explained only through the whole system. It is based on what Paul call the "new creation" and refers to its power of overcoming the demonic cleavages of the "old reality" in soul, society, and universe. If the Christian message is understood as the message of the "New Being," an answer is given to the question implied in our present situation and in every human situation.[2]

The question must be asked how this norm is related to the Bible, the basic source. The Bible as such, Tillich asserts, cannot be and never was the norm of theology. The Bible is normative in the sense that the norm is derived from the Bible; but this very norm is also the criterion for the use of the Bible in theology. The normative value, therefore, of the various biblical books is identical with the extent to which they express the norm which has been derived from them.[3]

Tillich's insistence on a norm for theology indicates his awareness of the vagueness attached to the sources and medium. A definite norm is needed, he quite properly realizes, to prevent theology from being lost in the relativities of church history and the subjectivity of experience. But it is not clear precisely how the norm as he formulates it solves the problems posed by the sources and medium, since the norm has been derived from the same sources of which it is said to be the judge. The norm which is to serve as a criterion of the Bible as a source of theology has been derived from the Bible, and the norm which is to stand in judgement of every religious experience has itself come about "in and through the encounter of the church with the Christian message."[1] It is this same norm, moreover, which constitutes the "idea of theology," which it is claimed is fulfilled in Christian theology in a final and perfect way.[2] Now all of this is circular. Tillich is not unaware of this as his discussion of the theological circle clearly testifies. He is also most likely correct in his belief that this difficulty is unavoidable in theology. But it also becomes essential that the theologian at some point step outside that circle if he hopes to show that the validity of his theology extends beyond the confines of his circle.

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[1] Ibid., p. 49. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid., pp. 50-51.

The sources, medium, and norm of theology have now been examined; but all of these function and can finally be understood only in relation to the doctrine of revelation on which they depend. Revelation, for Tillich, is "a special and extraordinary manifestation which removes the veil from something which is hidden in a special and extraordinary way."[3] That which is hidden is called a "mystery," by which is indicated a "dimension which 'precedes' the subject-object relationship," and which, therefore, "is experienced in an attitude which contradicts the attitude of ordinary cognition."[4] In making manifest the mysterious, revelation does not deprive it of its mysterious char-

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[1] _Ibid_., p. 48. [2] _Ibid_., p. 15. [3] _Ibid_., p. 108.

[4] _Ibid_.

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acter; for what is essentially mysterious cannot lose this characteristic.[1] While the mystery is not dissolved in revelation, something more is known of the mystery after it has been revealed; for both the reality of the mystery and our relation to it have become matters of experience.[2]

Tillich emphasizes that a "mystery" must be distinguished from a "problem." Unanswered scientific puzzles and unsolved crimes are not mysteries, because the answers to these puzzles are discovered by a methodical cognitive approach. Problems and puzzles cease to be mysterious when the answers are found. The genuine mystery, on the contrary, "appears when reason is driven beyond itself to its 'ground and abyss,' to that which 'precedes' reason, to the fact that 'being is and nonbeing is not' (Parmenides), to the original fact that there is something and not nothing."[3]

The first criterion of revelation, therefore, is the condition that what is made manifest is a mystery. This excludes from revelation any factual content concerning the subject-object structure of reality.[4] A mystery, however, has both a negative and a positive side. Negatively, mystery involves the "shock" of the threat of nonbeing, the element of "abyss" in the ground of being. Positively, mystery appears as the ground and power of being which overcomes nonbeing, and appears as our ultimate concern.[5] An analysis of the positive and negative sides of genuine mystery leads to a second criteri-

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[1] Thus, for example, although God reveals Himself, He remains mysterious.

[2] S.T. I, p. 109.

[3] Ibid., p. 110.

[4] Ibid., pp. 109-110.

[5] Ibid., p. 110.

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on: "Revelation is the manifestation of what concerns us ultimately. The mystery which is revealed is of ultimate concern to us because it is the ground of our being. . . . Only that mystery which is of ultimate concern for us appears in revelation."[1] Since revelation is inherently related to our ultimate concern, it is "invariably revelation for someone in a concrete situation of concern."[2] There is thus no revelation in general, for there is revelation only where someone "receives it as his ultimate concern."[3] Revelation, therefore, always implies both a subjective and an objective event. Something must indeed happen and what happens must be received by someone. The objective side is termed, by Tillich, "miracle," and the subjective reception is called "ecstasy." Both of these terms require reinterpretation because of their frequent distortion in both theology and the popular mind.[4]

"Ecstasy" is a state in which the mind transcends its ordinary situation. It does not negate reason, but is "the state of mind in which reason is beyond itself, that is, beyond its subject-object structure."[5] In going beyond itself, however, reason does not deny itself or accept what is antirational; but it transcends the subject-object structure of finite rationality. "Ecstasy occurs only if the mind is grasped by the mystery, namely, by the ground of being and meaning. And, conversely, there is no revelation without ecstasy."[6] Ecstasy must not be confused, however, with enthusiasm or overexcitement. Overexcitement can be understood solely in psychological terms, but genuine ecstasy transcends, although it includes, the psychological

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[1] _Ibid_. See also, "The Problem of Theological Method," p. 22.

[2] _Ibid_., p. 111.

[3] _Ibid_.

[4] _Ibid_.

[5] _Ibid_., p. 112.

[6] _Ibid_.

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side. "Ecstasy is the form in which that which concerns us unconditionally manifests itself within the whole of our psychological conditions."[1] The ecstatic experience of revelation is one which both preserves and overcomes the ontological shock of non-being. "Ecstasy unites the experience of the abyss to which reason in all its functions is driven with the experience of the ground in which reason is grasped by the mystery of its own depth and the depth of being generally."[2]

The rational or cognitive side of ecstasy can be called "inspiration" provided that this word is carefully used. The fundamentalistic view which regards biblical inspiration as a mechanical dictation of information from a supreme being is "nonecstatic." Such a conception is demonic, in Tillich's view, because it demands the destruction of the rational structure of reason. Inspiration supplies no knowledge about finite objects; it rather "opens a new dimension of knowledge, the dimension of understanding in relation to our ultimate concern and to the mystery of being."[3]

The objective event in revelation is termed "miracle." Tillich rejects the view that miracles are events which contradict the laws of nature. Such a view, which regards God as interfering supranaturally in the processes of nature, demands that God be split within himself; for it views the ground of being as destroying the structure of being.[4] Theology has been burdened, Tillich believes, with what he calls a "rationalistic antirationalism" in regard to miracles. He states:

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[1] _Ibid._, p. 113. [2] _Ibid._ [3] _Ibid._, p. 115.

[4] _Ibid._, pp. 115-116.

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"A kind of irrationalist rationalism develops in which the degree of absurdity in a miracle story becomes the measure of its religious value. The more impossible, the more revelatory!"[1]

Miracles should be regarded as "sign-events." Sign-events do not destroy the rational structure of the reality in which they appear, but consist in "special constellations of elements of reality in correlation with special constellations of elements of the mind."[2] Three conditions must be fulfilled for a miracle to be genuine: first, it must be an event which is "astonishing, unusual, shaking, without contradicting the rational structure of reality;" second, it must "point to the mystery of being, expressing its relation to us in a definite way;" and finally, it must be "received as a sign-event in an ecstatic experience."[3] The first condition stipulates that a miracle must have revelatory power, the second distinguishes it from sorcery, and the third condition distinguishes actual miracles from mere reports about beliefs in miracles. There are no "objective" miracles. Unless a miracle is received by someone in the experience of ecstasy, there is no genuine miracle.

In spite of its rather intricate elaboration, the main direction of Tillich's conception of revelation should now be clear. To be sure, however, Tillich is much clearer in what he denies than in what he asserts about revelation. The feature of revelation which Tillich emphasizes most is negatively, that it gives no information, and positively, that it is the manifestation through the depth of reason of the ground of being. Tillich's intention here, clearly, is to remove revelation from any possible conflict with factual information derived from scientific and historical analyses of reality. Scientific explanation and historical criticism do not touch revelation, because it belongs to a dimension of reality with which their methods cannot deal and with which their results do not conflict. Scientific analyses can help to protect revelation, however, from superstitious interpretations. Science joins genuine theology in the war against supranaturalistic distortions of revelation.[1] One may surely wonder, however, whether Tillich has not paid too high a price for this alliance between science and theology. For while his attempt to resolve the age old conflicts between science and religion is certainly admirable, it should be noticed that the alliance is achieved at no cost whatsoever for science, but at great expense for theology in that all factual claims have been surrendered. If the modern scientific mind finds theology as interpreted by Tillich less offensive than traditional theology, one may justifiably wonder whether this is because a solution to the conflicts between reason and revelation has been found or because it is so difficult to ascertain what, if anything, is being asserted by this brand of theology. In order to be able to accept or reject any view, theological or otherwise, one must have some notion of what claims such a view makes. Fundamentalism is easy to reject precisely because it is simplistically clear in its claims. On the other hand, as was already mentioned, while Tillich's conception of revelation is clear in its rejections, its positive side is to say the least quite nebulous. The concept of revelation is clothed in a variety of vague

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 115. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 117. [3] *Ibid.*

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[1] _Ibid._

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phrases, such as "manifestation of what concerns us ultimately," which repeated over and over again have an almost hypnotic effect upon the reader, but whose meaning is not at all evident. This is not to say that the traditional doctrine of revelation is necessarily superior to Tillich's, but it is to suggest that whatever problems Tillich's conception may solve, it raises in turn many problems of its own.

In revelation, the object of our ultimate concern, the ground of our being, is revealed. But the ground of being is no "object" in the ordinary sense. God does not exist, according to Tillich, but is the "ground" in which the structure of being is rooted and which transcends that structure infinitely. Tillich must thus consider the question as to how that which transcends the structure of reality can be represented to finite beings who are subject to that structure. While nothing in itself can adequately represent our ultimate concern, he believes, everything "participates in the ground and meaning of being" and can, as a result, become a vehicle for the mystery of being. "Nothing is excluded from revelation in principle because nothing is included in it on the basis of special qualities."[1] The revelation of the ground of being, therefore, is mediated through innumerable natural objects and events (for example, stones, stars, plants, and natural catastrophes), individuals, groups, historical events, and words.[2] None of these things are revelatory in themselves, but are so only in those situations where they become transparent to the ground of being and meaning.

Of particular importance as a medium of revelation, in Tillich's view, is the "word." "Man's rational structure cannot be understood

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 118. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 118-125.

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without the word in which he grasps the rational structure of reality. Revelation cannot be understood without the word as a medium of revelation."[1] The concept of the "word" is important for theology because although the ecstatic experience of revelation is unique, it cannot create its own language but must use ordinary language. Ordinary language, however, "expresses and denotes the ordinary experience of mind and reality in their categorical structure."[2] The word can thus become a medium of revelation only insofar as it "points beyond its ordinary sense both in denotation and in expression."[3] Ordinary language as a revelatory medium must have, that is, "a denotative power which points through the ordinary meanings of the words to their relation to us" and "an expressive power which points through the ordinary expressive possibilities of language to the unexpressible and its relation to us."[4] All this, however, does not destroy the logical structure of ordinary language, Tillich maintains, because revelation does not come through nonsensical combinations of words. Language as a medium of revelation must have the "sound" and "voice" of the mystery of being which is the divine.[5] In itself, ordinary language

> does not have the "sound" and "voice" which makes the ultimate perceivable. When speaking of the ultimate, of being and meaning, ordinary language brings it down to the level of the preliminary, the conditioned, the finite, thus muffling its revelatory power. Language as a medium of revelation on the contrary, has the "sound" and "voice" of the divine mystery in and through the sound and voice of human expression and denotation. Language with this power is the "Word of God."[6]

Tillich maintains that what is mediated through revelation is "knowledge." But the knowledge of revelation is such that it can only

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 122. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 123. [3] *Ibid.*, pp. 123-124.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 124. [5] *Ibid.* [6] *Ibid.*

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be gained in the revelatory situation, and more significantly, can never be separated from that situation. The knowledge of revelation cannot be introduced, once received, into the context of ordinary knowledge. Knowledge of revelation does not interfere with ordinary knowledge, and ordinary knowledge, by the same token, cannot interfere with the knowledge of revelation.[1] This being the case, one may wonder with what justification Tillich may call revelation "knowledge" at all. Knowledge of revelation, Tillich believes, is "knowledge about the revelation of the mystery of being to us."[2] The insights it provides refer to man's relation to the ground and power of his being. It is knowledge of God and thus symbolic. Tillich does not, however, satisfactorily answer the very difficult question as to how knowledge which is irreducibly symbolic can justifiably be called "knowledge."[3]

The Content of Theology

The content of theology has already been touched upon in the consideration of Tillich's second criterion of theology. Theology is concerned with being insofar as it gives us ultimate concern. Theology deals with the content of ultimate concern: that which has the power of threatening and saving our being. Theology, therefore, is not primarily concerned with the structure of being as such, but with the meaning of being for us. The relation "to us," Tillich contends, can never be omitted in theological assertions. The theologian speaks theologically only to the extent that he relates being to man's ultimate meaning and destiny.[1] In this sense, theology may be called "practical" or "existential."

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[1] _Ibid._, pp. 129-130. Tillich uses the phrase "knowledge of revelation" instead of the more common expression "revealed knowledge," since the latter is more likely to give the impression, he believes, that revelation is ordinary knowledge communicated in an extraordinary way.

[2] _Ibid._, p. 129.

[3] Tillich has often been criticized on this count. See, for example, Paul Edwards, "Professor Tillich's Confusions," _Mind_, LXXIV (April, 1965), pp. 197-206. See also, William P. Alston, "Tillich's Conception of a Religious Symbol," in _Religious Experience and Truth_, S. Hook, ed. (New York: New York University Press, 1961), pp. 12-26.

> Existential is what characterizes our real existence in all its concreteness, in all its accidental elements, in its freedom and responsibility, in its failure, and in its separation from its true and essential being. Theology thinks on the basis of this existential situation and in continuous relation to it. Asking for the meaning of being, theology asks for the ultimate ground and power and norm and aim of being, as far as it is *my* being and carries *me* as the abyss and ground of my existence, it asks for the threatening and promising power over *my* existence, for the fulfilling and rejecting aim of *my* existence. In other words: In asking for the meaning of being, theology asks for God.[2]

Theology must, in Tillich's view, fulfill a two-fold function: it must be a methodical explanation of the contents of the Christian faith, and that content must be expounded in such a way that it is shown to be relevant to man's ultimate meaning and destiny. "Theology moves back and forth between two poles, the eternal truth of its foundation and the temporal situation in which the eternal truth must be received.[3] Theology, thus, has both a "kerygmatic" and an "apologetic" element. This duality "is implied in the very word 'theology,' the syllable 'theo' pointing to the *kerygma*, in which God is revealed, and the syllable 'logy' pointing to the endeavor of human reason to receive the message."[4] Theology is, therefore, as Tillich also likes to put it,

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[1] "Philosophy and Theology," in *The Protestant Era*, p. 87.

[2] *Ibid*., p. 88. [3] *S.T.* I, p. 3.

[4] "Philosophy and Theology," p. 84.

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"answering" theology. It must answer the questions implied in the existential situation with the content of the Christian message.[1]

> The Christian message provides the answers to the questions implied in human existence. These answers are contained in the revelatory events on which Christianity is based and are taken by systematic theology from the sources, through the medium, under the norm. Their content cannot be derived from the questions, that is, from an analysis of human existence. They are "spoken" to human existence from beyond it.[2]

The content of theology is thus determined by the Christian message itself, but the form in which this content is presented is influenced by the questions implied in man's existential situation.

The content of Tillich's theology, that is, the answers which he thinks the Christian message provides to existential questions, cannot be pursued here in detail. It should be stated briefly, however, what Tillich thinks these questions and answers are. Basically, theology can be divided into three parts, although for practical reasons Tillich has divided his theological system into five parts. The three parts reflect a trinitarian structure in Tillich's theology, in that each part corresponds to a "person" in the traditional trinitarian conception of God. The first part analyses the essential nature of man out of which analysis arises the question of man's finitude and of finitude generally. The theological answer is God as the ground and power of being to overcome non-being. The second part of the theological system analyses man's existential self-estrangement and the destructive aspects of existence in general. The answer to existential estrangement is the Christ as the bearer of the "New Being." The third part analyses life, or being in its actuality as it displays both essential

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[1] S.T. I, p. 6. [2] Ibid., p. 64.

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and existential features in a complex and dynamic unity. The question implied in the ambiguities of life is answered by the Spirit. The dimension of life called "history" is treated in a fourth section, and the question arising from the ambiguities of history is answered by the theological symbol "Kingdom of God." Finally, a fifth part of the system (which is dealt with first in Tillich's system) concerns the ambiguities of reason in existence, and the theological answer to which is "revelation."[1]

The examination of the conception of philosophy and of theology is now complete. Attention must now be given to an inquiry into Tillich's view as to how precisely philosophy and theology are related. This will be taken up in the next chapter where Tillich's conception of the philosophy-theology relation is considered.

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[1] Ibid., pp. 66-68.

CHAPTER IV

THE RELATION BETWEEN PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY

So far, Tillich's conceptions of philosophy and theology have been considered mainly as independent disciplines, that is, so far as they are distinguished from one another. In the course of this examination, several difficulties have been met. Some of these stem from ambiguities in Tillich's thought and writing; others, however, are inherent in the very attempt to consider Tillich's notions of philosophy and theology separately. It was observed, for example, that Tillich's attempt to distinguish philosophy and theology according to the attitudes they require, the source of their knowledge, and their contents, is unsatisfactory in that Tillich vacillates between making these distinctions very rigid and qualifying them to the point that they are virtually obliterated. Again, it was noticed that while Tillich distinguishes a philosophical sense of being ("structure of being") and a religious-theological sense of being ("being-itself"), the status of this distinction is precarious because Tillich himself often tends to obscure and ignore it as he passes easily from one side to the other. The reason for these difficulties, quite simply, is that, for Tillich, in the final analysis philosophy and theology cannot in actuality be separated, although they can and should be conceptually distinguished.[1] As a theologian, Tillich is primarily concerned to show the impossibil-

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[1] "Reply to Interpretation and Criticism," op. cit., pp. 336-337. See also, S.T. I, pp. 22-27.

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ity of such a separation from the theological side. His apologetic theology, and especially his "method of correlation," is an attempt to argue for the inclusion of the philosophical task within theology. But he maintains emphatically that the reverse is also true. Theology must be an element in every creative philosophy.[1] On the surface this demand is puzzling. An analysis of Tillich's view of the relation between philosophy and theology, however, will make it more clear why he takes this position.

In this chapter, consideration is given: first, to Tillich's conception of the relation between philosophy and theology; and second, to his "method of correlation" insofar as it exemplifies this relation. Finally, an interpretation of this relation is offered in which it is suggested that the fundamental presupposition of Tillich's conception of the distinction between, and relation of, philosophy and theology is his conception of form and content.

The Nature of the Philosophy-Theology Relation

Philosophers and theologians alike have been puzzled by Tillich's conception of the relationship between philosophy and theology. In his critical study of Tillich, Kenneth Hamilton calls his description of this relationship "one of the most elusive facets of his system."[2] The reason for this puzzlement has already been encountered during the course of this study. It is that on the one hand, Tillich labors to make a clear-cut distinction between philosophy and theology; and on

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[1] S.T. I, p. 25. See also, "Philosophy and Theology," op. cit., pp. 87-88.

[2] Op. cit., p. 59.

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the other hand, he speaks as though the two are identical and inseparable. Thus, Tillich maintains that while philosophy and theology both deal with being, they do so in very different ways, so that they differ in their cognitive approach, content, and source of knowledge.[1] Philosophy and theology are so distinct, Tillich contends at one point, that there can neither be any conflict between them nor a synthesis of them, and for the same reason: they share no common ground. He states: "A conflict presupposes a basis on which to fight. But there is no common basis between philosophy and theology. If the theologian and the philosopher fight, they do so either on a philosophical or on a theological basis."[2] But, on the other hand, Tillich frequently speaks as though philosophy and theology are very similar, if not identical. He says, for example:

> Philosophy, before attempting a description of the world in unity with all kinds of scientific and nonscientific experience, tries to understand being itself and the categories and structures which are common to all kinds of beings. This makes the division between philosophy and theology impossible, for, whatever the relation of God, world, and man may be, it lies in the frame of being; and any interpretation of the meaning and structure of being as being, unavoidably has consequences for the interpretation of God, man, and the world in their interrelations.[3]

That God, man, and world all lie within the frame of being is an observation which is neither surprising nor particularly objectionable. Everything conceivable does lie within that most general of frameworks. What is somewhat surprising, however, is that Tillich considers this fact to be sufficiently significant as to make a division between philosophy and theology impossible. But Tillich's seeming tendency to minimize the division between philosophy and theology comes into focus even

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[1] S.T. I, pp. 22-24. [2] Ibid., p. 26.

[3] "Philosophy and Theology," p. 86. See also, S.T. I, pp. 20-21.

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more disturbingly in his belief that philosophy contains a theological element and that all philosophers are theologians, and vice versa. He says: "Every creative philosopher is a hidden theologian (sometimes even a declared theologian). He is a theologian in the degree to which his existential situation and his ultimate concern shape his philosophical vision."[1] And elsewhere, Tillich states:

> We have searched for the object or question of philosophy, and we have discovered that a theological element, an ultimate concern, gives the impulse to philosophy. We have searched for the object or question of theology, and we have discovered that a philosophical element is implied in theology. . . . Only noncreative philosophy cuts itself off entirely from its existential basis. It has in its hands the shell, not the substance, of philosophy. . . . Both philosophy and theology become poor and distorted when they are separated from each other. Philosophy becomes logical positivism prohibiting philosophy from dealing with any problem which concerns us seriously. . . . Or it becomes history of philosophy, . . . a philosophy without existential basis, without theological ground and power. In the same way theology, denying entirely its philosophical concern, becomes as poor and distorted as philosophy without a theological impulse.[2]

In view of these and similar statements, Tillich's critics (both philosophical and theological) have concluded almost unanimously that in the final analysis his efforts to distinguish philosophy and theology fail. Thus, Kenneth Hamilton says that the philosophy-theology

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[1] S.T. I, p. 25. See also his article, "Relation of Metaphysics and Theology," op. cit., p. 59. In addition to other difficulties, Tillich's view that every creative philosopher is a theologian may raise, for some critics, the obvious historical objection: "If theology is Christian and if every philosopher is a theologian, where does this leave Greek philosophy?" Tillich does not, however, maintain that every philosopher is consciously a Christian theologian, or even that all theology is Christian theology. He would undoubtedly answer the objection above by saying that insofar as any philosophy or religion expresses a valid ultimate concern, it is substantially the same concern as that exhibited in Christian theology and may be assimilated to it, even though it could not be called "Christian" historically. The basis for this answer is provided by his view that God as the ground and power of being is manifested in the whole structure of being, not just in Christianity as a particular religion (although His manifestation here is normative).

[2] "Philosophy and Theology," pp. 88-89..

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distinction "really breaks down, because as Tillich himself admits, in the last resort the system must hold that the two are the same."[1] "If the two are said never to meet," Hamilton goes on to say, "it is for the same reason that a smile and a frown could be said never to meet, because, being formed by the same set of muscles, the one 'converges' or 'diverges' in relation to the other so that when the one appears the other disappears."[2] Hamilton concludes that the philosophy-theology relation is of secondary importance in Tillich's thought, despite Tillich's statements to the contrary; and he views the attempt to distinguish the two merely as an apologetic tactic: both philosophers and theologians would turn away from a complete synthesis of the two.[3] While other critics have not been so quick to assign a purely practical motive to the attempted distinction, Hamilton is by no means alone in his belief that the distinction collapses. John Herman Randall, Jr. writes: "As an Augustinian, he finds it ultimately impossible to set philosophy apart from theology, and his efforts to distinguish their emphases of course in the last analysis break down."[4] Henry Veatch states: "For it would seem as if Professor Tillich had made out such an exceedingly good case for the intimate relationship between metaphy-

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[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 64. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 60.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 70. Hamilton says, in part: "Unless philosophy and theology are essentially one, philosophical theology cannot be considered to be a live option. Yet, if these are offered in the form of a complete synthesis, both philosophers and theologians will turn away and refuse the offering. It is small wonder, therefore, that Tillich ceased to speak of 'theonomous metaphysics' and began to speak instead of 'the method of correlation'. The motive behind this tactical move is evident enough; yet there is no indication that the overall strategy has been changed."

[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 140.

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sics and theology as actually to threaten their distinguishability."[1] Yet another critic, J. Heywood Thomas, says: "The correlation that Tillich wants to establish has been put beyond all doubt; for if anything is theology then what makes it theology also makes it philosophy."[2] In a similar vein, Hendrik Kraemer writes: "According to his contention that the ontological, that is to say the philosophical question as he conceives it, is implied, is immanent in Biblical religion, he should, for the sake of consistency and clarity, unhesitatingly say that a synthesis is not only possible but even required, and that a conflict is not only unnecessary but in principle excluded."[3]

This impressive array of criticism necessitates a careful consideration of precisely how, and in what sense, Tillich thinks philosophy and theology are distinct but yet related. More particularly, the question must be asked whether Tillich's efforts to distinguish philosophy from theology do indeed fail, thus rendering senseless any talk about a relation between the two. In order to answer this question, careful attention must be given to some of Tillich's key statements on the subject.

One of the most important passages in relation to this problem is found in Tillich's "Reply to Interpretation and Criticism" which appears in the collection of essays, The Theology of Paul Tillich. The passage quoted below is of particular importanee because Tillich

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[1] "Tillich's Distinction between Metaphysics and Theology," Review of Metaphysics, X (June, 1957), p. 529.

[2] Op. cit., p. 42.

[3] Religion and the Christian Faith (London: Lutterworth Press, 1956), p. 427.

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is addressing himself precisely to those critics who claim that his distinction between philosophy and theology collapses. He states:

> There are many motives in my thought which point to a basic identity of theology and philosophy. Primary among these is the doctrine of the mutual immanence of religion and culture. I could say that in a perfect theonomy the philosophical analysis of the structure of being-in-itself would be united with a theological expression of the meaning of being for us. The idea of theonomy requires such an eschatological vision. . . . The mutual immanence of theology and philosophy, though never perfect, is a partially fulfilled eschatology. It is, in my own terminology, a state of theonomy. . . . But all this cannot prevent us from establishing a qualitative difference between philosophy and theology--a difference which must be stated sharply and clearly. In spite of the theonomous union between religion and culture, these two do not lie on the same level. Religion is the depth-dimension of culture, and theology points to this dimension not only in philosophy, but also in art and politics. . . . Unity does not exclude definitory distinction. And this distinction between the two becomes important even if the unity is real only in a fragmentary way.[1]

There is much of importance in these remarks, and I shall have occasion to refer to them again later in this chapter. For the present, however, I think it importantto note that Tillich believes both that philosophy and theology are in a very real way united so that in the final analysis it is impossible to separate them, and that it is possible and necessary to distinguish them clearly. Tillich admits that the distinction between philosophy and theology is essentially one of definition. Or, as Tillich's view was phrased at the beginning of this chapter, philosophy and theology cannot be separated actually, but they can be distinguished conceptually or definitionally. To be sure, Tillich is now open to the objection that his distinction between philosophy and theology is a trivial one; but he cannot, I think, be charged with failure to make the distinction.

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[1] Op. cit., pp. 336-337.

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What, then, is the definitional distinction between philosophy and theology, according to Tillich's theory? It is essentially this: philosophy deals with the structure of being, or the meaning of being as it is in itself, while theology deals with the meaning of being for us. Philosophy attempts to give an objective description of the elements and categories in which everything that is participates, simply by virtue of the fact that it is; theology, with commitment and concern, attempts to speak of the power of being to save our being from ultimate meaninglessness. Philosophy analyses the human situation and develops the questions implied in that situation; theology provides the answers to these existential questions from the eternal truth of the Christian message. Philosophy is theoretical, while theology is existential. This is the definitional distinction which Tillich makes between philosophy and theology, and he has maintained this distinction with considerable consistency throughout the past three decades. These definitions are, of course, open to both philosophical and theological objections. One may think, that is, that Tillich has been seriously misguided in his choice of definitions; but there is little reason for saying that his distinction between philosophy and theology, if taken as he intends it, collapses.

Having examined the sense in which philosophy and theology are distinct, there remains the question as to how they are related and in what sense they are inseparable. They are inseparable in this sense: in any given philosophical or theological work, say Kant's Critique of Pure Reason or Calvin's Institutes, there is both a philosophical and a theological element, although one or the other may be dominant. Insofar as the work reflects a detached attempt to speak of the meaning

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of being and its structures, or attempts to analyze the existential situation, it is by definition philosophical. And insofar as a work is motivated by and reflects an ultimate concern, and deals with the meaning of being for us or the power of being to resist non-being and overcome the estrangement and ambiguity of existence, it is by definition theological. This is precisely what Tillich has in mind when he speaks, probably ill-advisedly, of philosophers being hidden theologians, of theologians performing philosophical tasks, of philosophy containing a theological element, and so forth. How, then, does one distinguish a philosophical work from a theological work, since both elements are invariably contained in each? Tillich's only answer to this question is that such works may be distinguished according to their emphasis and intention. The emphasis and intention of a theological book is on the meaning of being for us, although it does contain philosophical elements. The work of the philosopher, on the other hand, attempts to describe the structure of being even though the philosopher's vision may be shaped by his ultimate concern.[1]

The definitional distinction between philosophy and theology, moreover, accounts in large part for Tillich's dictum that philosophy does not answer its own important questions.[2] This aspect of Tillich's thought has quite understandably evoked a rather negative response from philosophers. Without suggesting at this point that this notion is defensible, I think it can be said, however, that there is a sense in

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[1] S.T. I, pp. 24-25; "Philosophy and Theology," pp. 88-92; Biblical Religion, pp. 18-20; "Relation of Metaphysics and Theology," pp. 59-62.

[2] S.T. I, pp. 30, 63, 120. See also, Theology of Culture, p. 49; and The Protestant Era, p. xxii.

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which this idea is much more innocuous than it may first appear. Tillich has never suggested that the great philosophers have not traditionally given answers to their questions, nor has he maintained that philosophers always give wrong answers when they answer their questions. What he does say is that philosophers _as_ philosophers cannot, from an ontological analysis of existence alone, provide answers to the ultimate questions posed by the existential situation.[1] In saying this, Tillich is merely employing his definitional distinction between philosophy and theology. The philosopher as philosopher cannot answer existential questions because as soon as he stops giving an objective description of the structure of being and becomes existentially concerned, he becomes a theologian by definition. Consider, for example, Tillich's statement of the senses in which philosophers are theologians.

> He is a theologian in the degree to which his existential situation and his ultimate concern shape his philosophical vision. He is a theologian in the degree to which his intuition of the universal _logos_ of the structure of reality as a whole is formed by a particular _logos_ which appears to him on his particular place and reveals to him the meaning of the whole. And he is a theologian in the degree to which the particular _logos_ is a matter of active commitment within a special community. There is hardly a historically significant philosopher who does not show these marks of a theologian. But the philosopher does not intend to be a theologian.[2]

But there is another sense in which philosophy and theology are related, one which, I think, has been altogether too little noticed by philosophers. This is Tillich's belief that all philosophy is ultimately motivated by a religious concern. Philosophy and theology are related in that religious concern is the ultimate source of both. The difference is that theology is intentionally religious, while philosophy is not. Theology attempts to provide a methodical exposition and interpretation of the symbols of the Christian faith, while philosophy attempts to give a description of the principles and categories of being. Both, however, are motivated by a religious concern, although the philosopher may well be unaware of it. Thus, in a passage quoted earlier in this chapter, Tillich says that "a theological element, an ultimate concern, gives the impulse to philosophy."[1] And elsewhere he states:

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[1] _Ibid_., pp. 63-64.

[2] _Ibid_., p. 25.

> A description of the way in which the ontological problem arises out of the human situation universally implies that in every genuine philosophy two functions of the human mind are effective. One of them is usually called "theoretical;" the other, "existential." The philosopher faces reality with that astonishment which is the beginning of all knowledge. . . . For thousands of years every philosopher has tried to define these principles, usually called "categories," and their relation to mind and reality. And, finally, he transcends even them and tries to reach being-itself, the ultimate aim of thought. . . . All this is done with the same strictness, the same logical and methodological rationality, with which a mathematician or a physicist or a historian works. But the philosopher is driven from one step to another and to the last step, the question of being-itself, by something else, the existential element. . . . It is always a driving force in the depths of his being that makes the philosopher a philosopher.[2]

Thus, the ultimate source of the motive to philosophize is, in Tillich's view, religious. Moreover, the answers which philosophers give, even concerning the structure of being, are derived ultimately from the manifestation of being-itself. Tillich says, for example, that "philosophy can discover the structure of being only to the degree to which being-itself has become manifest in an existential experience"[3] and that "the openness of being-itself, which is given in the basic religious experience, is the foundation for the philosophical grasp of the structure of being."[4] This conception, that philosophy and theology are related in that both stem from a religious concern, accounts more than anything else, I think, for Tillich's tendency to neglect to keep distinct the "structure of being" and "being-itself," and to pass easily from one to the other. In actuality, he sees philosophy and theology as so intimately related that he sometimes ignores his own definitional distinction.

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[1] "Philosophy and Theology," p. 88.

[2] Biblical Religion, pp. 18-19. [3] S.T. I, p. 230.

[4] Ibid., p. 235. See also, Biblical Religion, p. 65: "Ontology

This, then, is Tillich's theory of the relationship between philosophy and theology. In arguing that Tillich's definitional distinction between philosophy and theology does not collapse, and that, as a result, his conception of their relationship is not totally senseless, I have not meant to imply that those critics who were cited as believing the distinction fails are all entirely mistaken. On the contrary, some are merely pointing out the fact observed here, and recognized by Tillich himself, that philosophy and theology are ultimately inseparable. But the tendency of some of these critics has been to conclude from this that Tillich fails to distinguish the two.[1] Because of this, I have considered it necessary to point out precisely the sense in which philosophy and theology are distinguished and the sense in which they are inseparably related.

The Method of Correlation

The preceding section of this chapter has been devoted to an analysis of Tillich's general theory of the relationship between phi-

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presupposes a conversion, an opening of the eyes, a revelatory experience. It is not a matter of detached observation, analysis, and hypothesis."

[1] This tendency is evident particularly in the criticisms of Thomas and Kraemer, and to a lesser degree in the criticism of Veatch.

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losophy and theology. No discussion of this theory would be complete, however, without a consideration of his "method of correlation." On the other hand, it should be realized that the "method of correlation" is not so much a statement of the relation between philosophy and theology in general, as it is Tillich's statement of the procedure he intends to employ in his own theological system (and which, he believes, should be employed by systematic theologians in general). The method of correlation is designed primarily to indicate how philosophy may be brought into the context of systematic theology, so that the result may be an apologetic theology.[1] This fact must be kept in mind if one wishes to avoid a distorted view of Tillich's conception of the relation between philosophy and theology. Since virtually all of his discussions of this conception take place within the context of his theological works, one is apt to get the impression that Tillich sees the whole function of philosophy in terms of the service it can render to theology. There is no need, I think, to take this view; but it is true, of course, that in the context of his own work, Tillich has been interested chiefly in the role of philosophy in apologetic theology.

The method of correlation, then, in Tillich's view, is first of all a theological method. By means of it, the theologian "explains the contents of the Christian faith through existential questions and theological answers in mutual interdependence."[2] The Christian message

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[1] This is the context in which Tillich's remark that "the question of the relation of philosophy and theology is the question of the nature of theology itself" must be understood. See "Philosophy and Theology," p. 83. On this point see also, Christoph Rhein, op. cit., p. 81.

[2] S.T. I, p. 60.

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must be related to existential questions, Tillich contends, in order for that message to be meaningful to the contemporary situation. Otherwise, the message is thrown at men like a stone.[1] In using the method of correlation, systematic theology "makes an analysis of the human situation out of which the existential questions arise, and it demonstrates that the symbols used in the Christian message are the answers to these questions. The analysis of the human situation is done in terms which today are called 'existential.'"[2] In analyzing the human situation, the theologian uses material "made available by man's creative self-interpretation in all realms of culture."[3] Philosophy is used in this analysis, but it is not the only source. The theologian also gathers material from literature, sociology, and therapeutic psychology. Nevertheless, the analysis of the human situation is, Tillich maintains, a "philosophical analysis."

> The analysis of existence, including the development of the questions implicit in existence, is a philosophical task, even if it is performed by a theologian. . . . The difference between the philosopher who is not a theologian and the theologian who works as a philosopher in analyzing human existence is only that the former tries to give an analysis which will be part of a broader philosophical work, while the latter tries to correlate the material of his analysis with the theological concepts he derives from the Christian faith. This does not make the philosophical work of the theologian heteronomous. As a theologian he does not tell himself what is philosophically true. As a philosopher he does not tell himself what is theologically true. But he cannot help seeing human existence and existence generally in such a way that the Christian symbols appear meaningful and understandable to him. His eyes are partially focused by his ultimate concern, which is true of every philosopher. Nevertheless, his act of seeing is autonomous, for it is determined only by the object as it is given in his experience. If he sees something he did not expect to see in the light of his theological answer, he holds fast to what he has seen and reformulates the theological answer.[4]

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[1] Ibid., p. 7.

[2] Ibid., p. 62.

[3] Ibid., p. 63.

[4] Ibid., pp. 63-64.

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One may wonder here whether Tillich does not minimize the effect which the theologian's commitment has on his philosophical analysis of the human situation. For as Tillich himself recognizes, the theologian cannot help but see existence in the light of the Christian message; and the answers which he has in mind will inevitably color his selection of questions and the way in which he formulates these questions. A non-Christian philosopher might well see even the questions implied in the existential situation in an entirely different light. Bernard Martin, for example, argues that in his own analysis of existence, Tillich is philosophizing as a Christian. Admitting that Tillich's analysis borrows heavily from many philosophers, some of them non-Christian, Martin contends that the total structure of Tillich's analysis of existence "shows the unmistakable and heavy influence of specifically Christian thought."[1] Tillich is not unaware of the problem which resides in the possibility that the theologian's view of existence may be colored by his commitment, but he tends to minimize it. He does so because of his conviction that the theologian's condition is not essentially different from that of the philosopher. The philosopher, too, has an ultimate concern which influences his philosophical vision. Moreover, Tillich is confident that the theologian need not fear that what he sees in his philosophical analysis will necessitate a substantive change in the theological answer. This confidence stems from his presupposition that the particular logos, or the logos manifest in Jesus as the Christ, cannot conflict with the uni-

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[1] Op. cit., p. 33. In a similar vein, Marvin Fox writes: "Often one reads analyses of Tillich which ignore, at their peril, the Christian framework which he imposes on every important question and presupposes in all his answers." ("Tillich's Ontology and God," Anglican Theological Review, XLIII, July, 1961, pp. 260-261.)

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versal logos shared by all men, because truth is one. As Tillich puts it, "No philosophy which is obedient to the universal logos can contradict the concrete logos, the Logos 'who became flesh.'"[1] Without this presupposition, the theologian "would have to sacrifice either his philosophical honesty or his theological concern."[2]

The method of correlation, Tillich believes, is superior to three common, but inadequate methods of relating the Christian message to man's spiritual existence. The first is supranaturalism, which denies the possibility of mediation to the existential situation and views the Christian message as a "sum of revealed truths which have fallen into the human situation like strange bodies from a strange world."[3] The second, naturalism or humanism, "develops its answer out of human existence, unaware that human existence itself is the question."[4] The third, dualism or natural theology, "builds a supranatural structure on a natural substructure." This method at least is aware both of the infinite gap between God and man, and the demand that there be a positive relation between them. It fails, however, to realize that its arguments for the existence of God succeed only in analyzing the question of human finitude, but fail insofar as they attempt to derive an answer from the question.[5] The method of correlation solves this problem "by resolving natural theology into the analysis of existence and by resolving supranatural theology into the answers given to the questions implied in existence."[1]

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[1] S.T. I, p. 28. For a detailed exposition, interpretation, and criticism of the concept of the "logos" in Tillich's thought, see Hamilton, op. cit., Chapter III: "Divine Reason," pp. 54-77.

[2] Ibid., p. 64. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid., p. 65.

[5] Ibid.

The method of correlation brings together existential questions and theological answers. The attempt must now be made to understand more precisely Tillich's conception of the relationship between these questions and answers. Tillich says that he understands correlation as "interdependence of two independent factors" or as a "unity of the dependence and independence of two factors."[2] Questions and answers are independent in the sense that neither can be derived from the other. The answers which theology gives cannot be derived from the existential questions, but must be spoken to the existential situation. On the other hand, the theologian may not derive the question from the answer, because "the revelatory answer is meaningless if there is no question to which it is the answer. Man cannot receive an answer to a question he has not asked."[3] The interdependence of questions and answers, Tillich believes, must be discussed in terms of the "theological circle." "Theological circle" means that the theologian "is committed to a concrete expression of the ultimate concern, religiously speaking, of a special revelatory experience."[4] In spite of the concreteness of this experience, the theologian makes universal claims; he claims, that is, that the Christian message has universal validity, that its validity extends beyond the scope of his own circle. He is justified in doing so, Tillich believes, because as was said earlier, there can be no conflict between the universal logos and the concrete logos (Jesus as the Christ).

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[1] Ibid., pp. 65-66.

[2] S.T. II, p. 13.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid., p. 14.

In regard to the problem of the interdependence of existential questions and theological answers, Tillich suggests that the theological circle be understood as an ellipse containing "two central points--the existential question and the theological answer. Both are within the sphere of religious commitment, but they are not identical."[1] The *material* of the existential question is drawn from the totality of human experience, that is, from art, science, philosophy, psychology, and so forth. Material is chosen which reflects the existential predicament; the theologian, however, must select the material and formulate the question (although this selection and formulation, it should be remembered, is a philosophical task). Thus, the material of the question expresses the human situation; the *form* of the question, however, "is determined by the total system and by the answers given in it."[2] This fact, however, does not detract from the seriousness of the questions, Tillich claims, but "gives them a form determined by the theological system as a whole."[3] On the other hand, while the *substance* of the theological answers cannot be derived from the questions, Tillich says that the *form* of the theological answer does depend on the *form* of the existential question.[4]

Tillich's rather intricate discussion of the relation between questions and answers appears to have the purpose of assuring theologians that his method of correlation does not compromise the content of the Christian message, without, however, surrendering his own apologetic conception of theology. The philosopher, however, may well wonder to what extent the theological answers do answer philosophical or

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[1] *Ibid*., pp. 14-15. [2] *Ibid*., p. 15. [3] *Ibid*.

[4] *Ibid*., pp. 15-16.

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existential questions. Both question and answer are determined by the theological system. And to allow, as Tillich does, that the form of the answer depends on the form of the question, is no concession at all to the philosopher; for the theologian both selects the material for the question and gives it its form. This point will be discussed again in the final chapter. For the present, however, it may be well to repeat that the method of correlation does not constitute Tillich's theory of how philosophy and theology always are (or should be) related, but his procedure for including philosophical analysis (in his sense) within his theological system.

The Presupposition of the Philosophy-Theology Relation

Having examined Tillich's notions of the nature of philosophy and theology, how they are distinguished and related, the question arises as to why Tillich distinguishes them as he does. Philosophers may object to Tillich's conception of philosophy on the ground that it is at variance with the way in which philosophers today ordinarily conceive of their job. To this objection, however, it may be answered that there is a philosophical tradition to which Tillich can and does appeal, even though that tradition may not be currently in vogue. His appeal to that tradition does not, of course, in itself bestow validity upon his views; but it does help one to understand them. Again, theologians may object to Tillich's conception of theology; but, in its broad outlines at least, his notion of theology is not so totally new as to render it unintelligible. What is peculiar to Tillich, and hence difficult to understand, is precisely the way in which he distinguishes philosophy and theology by definition, only to view them as inseparably related in

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fact. Why, that is, has he so delimited philosophy and theology that philosophers must be theologians and theologians must be philosophers? Part of the answer may be apologetic strategy, and another part of the answer is undoubtedly Tillich's conception of the relation between the universal and particular logos; but these, I think, do not provide the whole answer. Tillich's distinction between philosophy and theology remains puzzling, I wish to suggest, until it is realised that the presupposition of the relation between philosophy and theology is his view of the relation between form and content.[1] On the basis of this presupposition, Tillich's view may be stated thus: philosophy is the form of theology, and theology is the content or substance of philosophy. Form and content are inseparable in fact, but they can be conceptually distinguished.

In Chapter II, it was observed that the question of the relation between philosophy and theology arises, for Tillich in his early works, within the context of the broader problem of the relation between religion and culture generally. It was also seen that Tillich attempts to resolve the problem of the relation between religion and culture in terms of the distinction between form and content. In his early works, religion is defined as being directed toward the unconditioned meaning or the content of meaning, and culture is viewed as being directed toward conditional forms of meaning and their unity. Form and content, however, belong together; one cannot be supposed without the other. Thus, Tillich came to the conclusion that religion and culture are inseparably related, although they are distinguished in terms of form and content. In his "Philosophy of Religion," he states: "Culture is the form of expression for religion, and religion is the content of culture."[1] The categories of form and content are of decisive significance for Tillich's philosophy of religion and culture, as he has himself recognized.[2] Moreover, he has never abandoned his early conception of the relation between religion and culture. In one of his more recent books, he states: "Religion as ultimate concern is the meaning-giving substance of culture, and culture is the totality of forms in which the basic concern of religion expresses itself. In abbreviation: religion as the substance of culture, culture is the form of religion."[3] And further on he adds: "He who can read the style of a culture can discover its ultimate concern, its religious substance."[4]

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[1] The distinction between form and content occurs in innumerable contexts in Tillich's works. It is also referred to as "form and substance" and "form and dynamics" (See S.T. I, pp. 178-179, 199-200, 245-246.), and is the basis of a variety of Tillichian distinctions. A detailed analysis of this concept in Tillich's thought cannot be undertaken within the limits of this study. The treatment of it here is confined to its immediate bearing on the relation between philosophy and theology. For a more detailed exposition of the form-content conception in Tillich's thought, see G.F. Sommer, op. cit., pp. 58-90. Sommer also discusses Tillich's source for this notion.

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[1] Op. cit., p. 329.

[2] The Interpretation of History, p. 15.

[3] Theology of Culture, p. 42. See also, The Interpretation of History, p. 50: "As the substance of culture is religion, so the form of religion is culture. There is only this difference, that in religion the substance which is the unconditioned source and abyss of meaning is designated, and the cultural forms serve as symbols for it; whereas in culture the form, which is the conditioned meaning is designated, and the substance, which is the unconditioned meaning becomes perceptible only indirectly throughout the autonomous form. The highest stage of culture is attained where human existence, in complete and autonomous form, is comprehended in its finitude and in its quest after the Infinite. And conversely, religion in its highest form must include the autonomous form within itself, the 'Logos,' as the Ancient Church termed it."

[4] Ibid., pp. 42-43.

What Tillich means in this statement of the relation between religion and culture is that there are no religious forms as such, but that religious content must always be expressed in cultural forms. "Every religious act," he says, "is culturally formed."[1] And, since he defines religion in terms of ultimate concern, all cultural creations are religious in substance to the extent that they express an ultimate concern.[2] By means of this conception he prevents a dualism

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 42.

[2] Tillich applies this general theory very interestingly in his analysis of works of art, especially paintings. He refers to the religious substance of paintings in many of his writings, but see especially the following: "Art and Ultimate Reality," *Cross Currents*, X (Winter, 1960), pp. 1-14; "Existentialist Aspects of Modern Art," Carl Michalson, ed., *Christianity and the Existentialists* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), pp. 128-147; and "Protestantism and Artistic Style," *Theology of Culture*, pp. 68-75. For discussions of Tillich's analysis of art in relation to the form-content distinction, see Adams, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-82, and Sommer, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-72.

A painting may be "religious" in the sense of expressing an ultimate concern, in Tillich's view, regardless of its subject matter or style. As Tillich puts it: "Every style points to a self-interpretation of man, thus answering the question of the ultimate meaning of life. Whatever the subject matter which an artist chooses, . . . he cannot help but betray by his style his own ultimate concern, as well as that of his group, and his period. He cannot escape religion even if he rejects religion, for religion is the state of being ultimately concerned. And in every style the ultimate concern of a human group or period is manifest." ("Protestantism and Artistic Style," p. 70.) Thus, for example, "idealism" expresses the highest potentialities of being and recalls the created goodness of reality. "It expresses the divine character of man and his world in his essential, undistorted, created perfection." ("Art and Ultimate Reality," p. 8.) In "expressionism," on the other hand, the ultimate appears in its dynamic character as that which breaks through form (ibid., p. 9), and is present as the ground and abyss in which everything that is is rooted ("Protestantism and Artistic Style," pp. 73-74). I shall mention here just two of the many examples which Tillich gives to illustrate the religious substance of paintings. Van Gogh's "Starry Night" is cited for its "character of going below the surface. It is a description of the creative powers of nature. It goes into the depths of reality where the forms are dynamically created. He does not accept the surface alone." ("Existentialist Aspects of Modern Art," p. 137.) And Tillich calls Picasso's "Guernica" one of the "best present-day Protestant religious pictures," not because it gives the

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of religion and culture, a dualism which, he believes, inevitably results in a disruption of meaning.

Because of the intimate relation of religion and culture, there can be what Tillich calls a "theology of culture." The theology of culture attempts to point out the religious dimension in the various spheres of culture.[1] It tries "to analyze the theology behind all cultural expressions, to discover the ultimate concern in the ground of a philosophy, a political system, an artistic style, a set of ethical or social principles."[2]

It is interesting that Tillich never defines the relationship between philosophy and theology in terms of the form-content relation. He never states explicitly, that is, that philosophy is the form of theology, and theology the content of philosophy. It is nevertheless undeniable, it seems to me, that the form-content relation is constantly in the background of his conception of the philosophy-theology relation. Some of his remarks which hint at this will be cited shortly; he fails, however, to state his presupposition explicitly.

That the form-content relation is not alien to his view of the philosophy-theology relation should be evident simply from a consideration of Tillich's conceptions of culture and religion. Philosophy is clearly a cultural activity and is classified among the various cultural expressions, as, for example, in his remark quoted above. Theology, moreover, is a function of religion and is defined, as is religion, in terms of ultimate concern. From this alone, it is evident

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Christian answer, but because it expresses in a radical way the human predicament of our age (ibid., p. 138).

[1] Theology of Culture, p. v.

[2] S.T. I, p. 39.

that the relation which holds for religion and culture generally, must also be applicable to the relation between philosophy and theology. But that the form-content relation stands behind the relation of philosophy to theology becomes even more apparent when one reflects upon Tillich's definitional distinction of them.

Philosophy is defined as the attempt to give an objective description of the structure of being, that is, the elements and categories in which all that is participates. This conception of philosophy, it should be observed, is totally concerned with form. Theology, on the other hand, deals with what concerns man ultimately, with the ground and power of being, with what in Tillich's early works was called the unconditional ground of meaning--in brief, theology is concerned with content. Tillich is aware, however, that form and content cannot be separated in this way. Philosophy, he recognizes, is not purely formal; and theological content cannot exist apart from form.[1]

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[1] The form-content relation stands in the background of Tillich's conceptions of philosophy and theology already in his early works, although again, it is not made as explicit as in his conceptions of culture and religion. It is evident, however, especially where Tillich contrasts philosophy and theology. Thus, philosophy is concerned with the universal principles (forms) of meaning, while theology is concerned with the norms of meaning; philosophy is termed "critical," whereas theology is described as "positive;" philosophy directs itself to thought and reason, and theology is turned toward being and the realization of life. Tillich insists, however, that theology must also be critical and that philosophy must also be positive (The System of the Sciences, pp. 241-242).

The form-content distinction, one should realize, is a very relative distinction; and it is employed by Tillich in various ways. The primary distinction is between philosophy as form and theology as content. But form and content may again be distinguished within both of them. Thus, Tillich's conception of philosophy attempts to combine "essentialism" and "existentialism," that is, to combine the formal description of the structure of being and the analysis of man's existential situation. Tillich's conception of theology exhibits the form-content relation in its effort to correlate the human situation and the Christian message. The "kerygma" is the content of theology; the

Content by itself is at most an abstraction denoting an irrational principle; and the last thing Tillich wants to say of theology is that it is irrational. Thus, in order to preserve the distinction, he must say that philosophers are theologians and that theologians must be philosophers. The philosopher is a theologian to the extent that his work reflects an ultimate concern, that is, so far as it is religious in substance. In this connection, the reasons Tillich gives for saying that the philosopher should not hesitate to admit his ultimate concern are most revealing. Without an ultimate concern, a philosophy lacks "passion, seriousness, and creativity."[1] And elsewhere he states: "Only noncreative philosophy cuts itself off entirely from its existential basis. It has in its hands the *shell*, not the *substance* of philosophy."[2] Moreover, when philosophy is separated from theology it becomes "logical positivism prohibiting philosophy from dealing with any problem which concerns us seriously" or it becomes "mere epistemology, always sharpening the knife of thought but never cutting."[3] Philosophy without a theological element, in Tillich's view, is form without substance.

Having defined the nature of philosophy in terms of the two-

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situation is the form in which that message must be expressed. At this point, however, Tillich's complex strategy becomes apparent. For the "existential" element in philosophy is by his definition a religious-theological element; and the "apologetic" character of theology is, again by his definition, its philosophical element. Once all this is granted, it becomes a simple matter to show that philosophy and theology must be related; for each contains an element of the other.

[1] *S.T.* I, pp. 24-25.

[2] "Philosophy and Theology," p. 89 (italics mine).

[3] *Ibid.*

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fold task of describing the structure of being and analyzing the existential situation and the questions implicit in it, Tillich must also say that theologians are philosophers. Since he attempts to deal with the meaning of being for us, the theologian cannot avoid reference to the structure of being, its categories, and the philosophical concepts employed to describe this structure.[1] His job of answering existential questions, moreover, requires him to analyze the human situation and formulate the questions implied in it. This analysis of the situation, however, is a philosophical task.[2]

In his reply to the criticism that he fails to distinguish philosophy from theology, quoted at length earlier, Tillich virtually admits the importance of the form-content distinction, as employed in his conception of religion and culture, for his view of the philosophy-theology relation. He mentions his "doctrine of the mutual immanence of religion and culture" as the primary motive in his thought which points to a "basic identity of theology and philosophy." Notwithstanding this unity, however, which of course is only partially fulfilled, he insists that a "qualitative difference" can be established between philosophy and theology. "Unity," he says, "does not exclude definitory distinction." Religion and culture, although they are united, are not on the same level. "Religion is the depth-dimension of culture, and theology points to this dimension not only in philosophy, but also in art and politics. . . ."[3] It should now be clear that Tillich's view of the philosophy-theology relation can be understood only in terms of his broader theory of the relation between culture

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[1] S.T. I, p. 21. [2] Ibid., p. 63.

[3] "Reply to Interpretation and Criticism," p. 337.

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and religion as a relation of form and content. Once this presupposition is realized, moreover, many of the puzzling features of Tillich's theory of the relation between philosophy and theology vanish.

The interpretation of the philosophy-theology relation suggested here enables one to understand, for example, why Tillich's sharpest criticism is directed against philosophical positivism and theological biblicism and fundamentalism. He regards positivism as form without content, and thus empty;[1] and he views fundamentalism, and every attempt at a purely kerygmatic theology, as content without form, and hence irrational.[2] In a sense, Tillich's criticisms of positivism and fundamentalism are strange, because these realize more nearly than does anything else his definitional distinction between philosophy and theology. But, while Tillich wants to distinguish philosophy and theology, he does not want to separate them. He wants to show that a relation between philosophy and theology is possible because each contains an element of the other. Positivism and biblicism must be rejected because they threaten this relationship.[3]

An understanding of the significance of the form-content dis-

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[1] S.T. I, pp. 20, 73; "Philosophy and Theology," p. 89.

[2] My interpretation here is also supported by Sommer (op. cit., pp. 56-57.), who states that Tillich's criticism of Barth implies essentially that Barth was willing to settle for "content" at the expense of "form."

[3] Consider, on this point, Tillich's argument in Biblical Religion, pp. 1-20. The following quotation is illustrative: "Some representatives of modern logic, while rejecting the whole of philosophy before the rise of logical positivism and semantic analysis, nevertheless are willing to use the term 'philosophy' for their own endeavors. For them the ontological question is meaningless and without cognitive value. . . . If they are right, the confrontation of what they call philosophy with biblical religion would be as absurd as the confrontation of electrophysics and biblical religion." (p. 15)

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tinction for the conception of the relation between philosophy and theology also enables one to appreciate the scope of Tillich's architectonic talents as evidenced in his elaboration of philosophical questions and theological answers in the five parts of his Systematic Theology. Tillich's philosophical critics may claim that his questions are not those which concern contemporary philosophers, and sceptics may protest that the theological answrrs given do not satisfactorily answer man's existential questions, both with some justification; but an understanding of the foundation of the philosphy-theology relation in that of form and content allows one to see, at least, how Tillich may regard the theological answers of his system as answers to the existential questions developed in it.

The theme of each of the existential questions elaborated in Tillich's system is the disruption of form and content in the state of existence. His answers, in turn, all point to the unity of form and content within the divine life. A detailed examination of Tillich's use of the concepts of form and content in working out the questions and answers of his system lies beyond the scope of this study. I shall, however, attempt to indicate briefly, by means of a few examples, the general form-content pattern which is exhibited in Tillich's effort to correlate philosophical questions and theological answers. Consider, for example, the question of "reason," the answer to which is "revelation." Reason in existence, Tillich maintains, is driven to the quest for revelation. But why is this so? What is the problem which drives reason to revelation? The problem, one learns upon reading Tillich's account, is that in finite, actual reason, the structure of reason (form) is estranged from its depth (content). As Tillich puts it: "The depth of reason is essentially manifest in reason. But it is hidden in reason under the conditions of existence. Because of these conditions reasons in existence expresses itself in myth and cult. . . . There should be neither myth nor cult. . . . They betray by their very existence the 'fallen' state of a reason which has lost immediate unity with its own depth."[1] Tillich goes on to describe the ambiguities and conflicts which beset actual reason. All of these conflicts reflect the tension between form and content.[2] Reason, therefore, is led to ask for revelation, "for revelation means the reintegration of reason."[3] Revelation, as viewed by Tillich, is the experience of ecstasy in which the rational structure of reason transcends itself (without, however, negating itself) and is united with its own depth.[4] Revelation answers the question of reason because it unites form and content, structure and depth, and thus overcomes the disruption of form and content in actual reason.

The same structure is apparent in the question of "being" and the answer, "God," which is given to it. The main problem in regard to being, in Tillich's view, is "finitude;" and finitude implies, for him, a tension between being and non-being. In all the elements and categories which make up the structure of finite being, being is mixed with non-being; and non-being threatens to overcome being.[5] The question of finite being is thus the question as to how the threat of non-being can be overcome. It is for this reason that man is depicted as being ultimately concerned about what determines his being or not-

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[1] S.T. I, p. 80.
[2] Ibid., pp. 83-94.
[3] Ibid., p. 84.
[4] Ibid., pp. 111-118.
[5] Ibid., pp. 186-201.

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being.[1] The answer to the question of being is "God" conceived as being-itself, and as the power and ground of being who has eternally overcome non-being within himself. God represents the eternal unity of form and content; he is the ground of the structure of being (form), and the dynamic power or content of being.[2]

The significance of the distinction between form and content for an understanding of Tillich's conception of the philosophy-theology relation should now be apparent. It is significant because it constitutes the presupposition both of the general theory of the relation between philosophy and theology and of his attempt to put that theory into practice in his elaboration of existential questions and theological answers within his theological system. Having examined Tillich's theory of the relation between philosophy and theology and exposed its fundamental presupposition, we shall proceed in the next and final chapter of this study to a critical discussion of some of the difficulties posed by the theory and attempt an evaluation of its merits.

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[1] Ibid., p. 14. [2] Ibid., pp. 235-249.

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CHAPTER V

EVALUATION AND CRITICISM

Having examined Tillich's conceptions of philosophy and theology, and of the nature of their relationship, the attempt must now be made to provide a critical assessment of the merits of his theory. It would be impossible, within the limits of a single chapter, to attempt any general evaluation of all of Tillich's work, or even to discuss all of the questions and problems raised by Tillich's conception of philosophy and its relation to theology. I shall select for discussion, therefore, a few significant problems which seem to me to have an important bearing, more or less directly, upon Tillich's view of philosophy and its relation to theology. In conclusion, I shall discuss briefly what I take to be the major contributions of Tillich's theory.

The Meaningfulness of "Being" and "Non-being"

Tillich's conception of philosophy centers around the question of being. Many philosophers have criticized Tillich rather severely on the ground that his "being" concepts--among them, "being," "ground of being," "being-itself," and "non-being"--are not meaningful, and hence involve him in a lot of senseless talk. Inasmuch as this criticism, if justified, deals a decisive and devastating blow to Tillich's entire philosophical and theological enterprise, some comment upon it, I think, is required.

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One critic, Elmer Sprague, has observed that we can handle most questions of the form, "What is X?", except when the word "being" is substituted for X. We can understand the question, "What is running?" because we can distinguish running from other activities, such as standing and jumping. "Being" and "is," on the other hand, cannot be so distinguished. Sprague says: "But when we are asked, 'What is is?' how are we to pick out is-ing? Where does is-ing leave off so that it can be distinguished from everything else?"[1] Sprague concludes that Tillich's question of being is without sense. Also without sense is Tillich's conception of non-being. He states: "Just as we do not know how to tell how long non-yards are, so we do not know how to attribute being to non-being. . . .for the life of us we are no good at finding non-being anywhere."[2] Another critic, Paul Edwards, claims that "Tillich's assertions about Being-itself are unintelligible."[3] His basic contention is that such assertions are irreducible metaphors and hence fail to refer. He states: "Being-itself is, even in principle, inaccessible to anybody's observation. . . . We do not and cannot have a stock of literally meaningful statements about it at our disposal which would serve as the equivalents of Tillich's 'symbolic' statements."[4] And Tillich's assertions containing "non-being," Edwards contends, are either senseless or are merely "bombastic re-descriptions" of empirical facts familiar to everyone.[5]

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[1] "On Professor Tillich's Ontological Question," International Philosophical Quarterly, II (1962), pp. 82-83.

[2] Ibid., p. 83.

[3] "Professor Tillich's Confusions," Mind, LXXIV (April, 1965), p. 194.

[4] Ibid., p. 201.

[5] Ibid., pp. 206-209.

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These criticisms indicate more than anything else, however, the utter futility of simply applying the philosophical criteria of one philosophical movement to a philosopher who comes out of an entirely different tradition without first having made a sincere attempt to understand what that philosopher is saying. Edwards' argument is based entirely on his presupposition about what can be meaningful, a presupposition which Tillich would categorically reject. At the outset, Edwards states that he is using a variety of expressions interchangeably.[1] These include: "meaningless," "unintelligible," "devoid of cognitive content," and "lacking referential meaning." But this criterion of meaning cannot be applied to Tillich without begging the question, for Tillich would never agree to submit to this theory of meaning. Tillich is fully aware that his "being" concepts do not denote ordinary entities, functions, or activities which can be referred to directly by means of ordinary language or be brought before the philosopher for his visual inspection. At the most, the criticisms of Sprague and Edwards show that if one identifies "meaning" and "reference," one can show that some of Tillich's assertions are without meaning; and this would come as no surprise at all to Tillich.

A more pertinent criticism of Tillich's conception of non-being has been suggested by Sidney Hook. Hook argues that "non-being," as Tillich uses it, is a psychological rather than an ontological category, and that since man creates the category of non-being, Tillich should not speak of him as participating in non-being.[2] Hook's ar-

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[1] Ibid., p. 195.

[2] The Quest for Being (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1961), p. 187.

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gument is based on Tillich's assertion that the distinction between being and non-being is created by unfulfilled or disappointed expectations.[1] If this were all that Tillich said about non-being, Hook would be justified in his criticism. But Tillich clearly indicates that it is not disappointed expectation in itself which is of primary significance. He goes on to ask: "But how is such an expectation possible in the first place? What is the structure of this being which is able to transcend the given situation and to fall into error?"[2] Moreover, Tillich has elsewhere made it clear that non-being is not merely a psychological category, but is involved in the ontological structure of finite being. Non-being, for Tillich, is above all the mark of finitude; and finitude can hardly be called merely psychological. Non-being is not merely an expression of man's negative feelings, although it is expressed in these. It is rather the characteristic of all finite being.[3]

Ultimate Concern and the Philosopher

An important question arises in connection with Tillich's belief that philosophy is motivated, in the final analysis, by an ultimate concern, and thus contains a theological element. Tillich assumes that all men, including philosophers, are ultimately concerned, consciously or unconsciously, about their finitude or their separation from being-itself. The element of ultimate concern in philosophy constitutes the primary reason why Tillich thinks he can relate philosophy and theology in the way he does. It is the element of ultimate concern,

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[1] S.T. I, p. 187. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid., pp. 192-198.

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that is, which gives philosophy its religious-theological substance. But is it really the case that all philosophy which is not empty contains such a concern? Most philosophers would agree with Tillich, I think, that philosphy is not, in fact, always purely formal, but does reflect a concern with important issues--social, ethical, political, and, indeed, sometimes religious. Nor do I have any objection to calling this element of concern in philosophy an "existential concern." The important question, however, is whether such concern is always "ultimate concern." Several problems arise, therefore, in relation to Tillich's notion of ultimate concern which have an important bearing on his conception of philosophy and its relation to theology, and which, therefore, require some discussion.

The first concerns Tillich's apparent belief that everyone has an ultimate concern (regardless, for the present, of the content of that concern). But, is it true that all men have an ultimate concern? More important, how can such a view be substantiated or confuted? Tillich could conceivably want to regard the proposition "All men have an ultimate concern" as true by definition, but in that case he is not giving us any significant information about men. If he does not regard this proposition as analytically true, then his claim surely requires some empirical evidence. Not even a survey of all men would provide such evidence, however, because in Tillich's view, one may not even be conscious of his ultimate concern. Now, I do believe that Tillich has adduced some evidence for his position. His various discussions of the way in which men commit themselves totally to a religion, a nation, a political party, a social program, or even a philosophy are, in this respect, very perceptive. His concep-

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tion of ultimate concern, therefore, is not sheer speculative fantasy. But the question remains whether he has evidence sufficient to justify his attributing this attitude to everyone; and here, I think, it may be said that he does not.

Let us assume, however, that Tillich is correct in his belief that most, or even all, men have an ultimate concern; we shall agree, that is, that everyone is ultimately concerned about something in the sense that there is something to which he commits himself unconditionally or which he values above all else. It is this attitude of "being ultimately concerned about something," moreover, which Tillich attributes to everyone, and which he has in mind when he says: "'God' is the name for that which concerns man ultimately. This does not mean that first there is a being called God and then the demand that man should be ultimately concerned about him. It means that whatever concerns a man ultimately becomes god for him, and, conversely, it means that a man can be concerned ultimately only about that which is god for him."[1]

According to Tillich, whatever concerns a man ultimately, be that wealth, prestige, power, or his country, is his god. In that sense, he may say that ultimate concern is always religious (although, to be sure, religious by definition). Now, this usage of the word "god" may be peculiar, but I have no very serious objection to it. A problem arises, however, when Tillich confuses "being ultimately concerned" and "being concerned about that which is ultimate." Thus, to admit that everyone is ultimately concerned is not necessarily to admit that everyone is concerned about the ultimate or being-itself.

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[1] Ibid., p. 211.

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Tillich does not always confuse ultimate concern with concern about the ultimate as his discussion of preliminary concerns and idolatry clearly testifies.[1] But the tendency to confuse these two does exist. Compare, for example, the quotation above with what Tillich says about ultimate concern in his discussion of the second criterion of theology.

> What is the content of our ultimate concern? What _does_ concern us unconditionally? . . . _Our ultimate concern is that which determines our being or not-being_. . . . Man is ultimately concerned about his being and meaning. . . . Man is infinitely concerned about the infinity to which he belongs, from which he is separated, and for which he is longing. . . . Man is unconditionally concerned about that which conditions his being beyond all the conditions in him and around him. Man is ultimately concerned about that which determines his ultimate destiny beyond all preliminary necessities and accidents.[2]

Here, Tillich seems to be assuming that ultimate concern is always directed toward what is ultimate. As a result, he makes a transition very easily from the attitude of ultimate concern to the object of ultimate concern. That this transition is not justified has been pointed out most perceptibly by William Alston. He states:

> As Tillich explained "ultimate concern," the ultimacy is psychological; it consists in the supremacy of that concern in the psychic structure of the individual. It is in quite a different

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[1] _Ibid._, pp. 12-13. "Idolatry is the elevation of a preliminary concern to ultimacy. Something essentially conditioned is taken as unconditional, something essentially partial is boosted into universality, and something essentially finite is given infinite significance (the best example is the contemporary idolatry of religious nationalism). The conflict between the finite basis of such a concern and its infinite claim leads to a conflict of ultimates; it radically contradicts the biblical commandments and the first theological criterion." (p. 13)

[2] _Ibid._, p. 14. See also _Dynamics of Faith_, p. 9: "The unconditional concern which is faith is the concern about the unconditional. The infinite passion, as faith has been described, is the passion for the infinite. Or, to use our first term, the ultimate concern is concern about what is experienced as ultimate."

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> way that being-itself is thought by Tillich to be ultimate. It is ontologically ultimate by virtue of the fact that it is the ultimate ground of all being. Once this distinction is made, we can see that there is no reason to suppose that (psychologically) ultimate concern must be concern directed to what is (ontologically) ultimate. But the verbal identity may make the transition seem obvious.[1]

Once the distinction is made between the attitude of ultimate concern and the ultimate (being-itself), however, there remains the question as to the sense in which philosophers are ultimately concerned. Assuming that an ultimate concern does give the impulse to all philosophy, does this mean that philosophers are always ultimately concerned about being-itself? Is it not possible for the philosopher, as it is for other men, to be ultimately concerned about something less than being-itself--that is, in Tillich's terminology, to elevate to ultimacy something which should properly be only a preliminary concern? Assuming that it is possible for the philosopher's ultimate concern to be misdirected, what implications would such a misdirected ultimate concern have for the theological content of his philosophy? By defining the religious attitude in terms of ultimate concern, and by saying that whatever concerns someone ultimately is his god, Tillich could still claim, I suppose, that there is a religious or theological element in all philosophy that reflects an ultimate concern, even if that concern happens to be "idolatrous" in some philosophers. But what would this mean? In what sense, that is, could such a philosophy be said to have a "theological substance" in a way that it

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[1] "Tillich's Conception of a Religious Symbol," Religious Experience and Truth, Sidney Hook, ed. (New York: New York University Press, 1961), pp. 20-21. It should be noted that Tillich is guilty of the same transition in his analysis of the religious substance of paintings. He assumes that in expressing an ultimate concern, the artist also expresses ultimate reality. (See "Art and Ultimate Reality," *op. cit.*, pp. 1-14.)

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could be significantly related to Christian theology?

Tillich's awareness of this difficulty, no doubt, accounts in part for his ceaseless efforts to focus the philosophical task on the question of being. For as long as it is agreed that the philosopher's concern is with being, it is relatively easy to make a transition from being to being-itself; and Tillich himself makes that transition all too easily. But even assuming that Tillich is correct in his view that the philosopher's task is to provide an ontological description of the structure of being, there is no obvious necessary connection between this task and being ultimately concerned about being-itself (in Tillich's sense of that term). It is quite conceivable, it seems to me, that a philosopher might devote himself to a study of the structure of being, and yet be ultimately concerned about something other than being-itself. In order for Tillich to be able to say that philosophy has a theological content, it is not sufficient that it deal with the structure of being; it must also be presumed that philosophy is theonomous. It is Tillich's recognition of the fact that theonomy cannot be presumed, I think, which accounts for the fact that he does not allow the apologetic theologian to borrow his ontological analysis from a philosopher, but insists that he perform this philosophical task himself. This same recognition, however, should have led Tillich to question his belief that all creative philosophy contains a theological element.

"Being-itself as a Philosophical Concept

According to Tillich, the philosopher's primary concern is with the structure of being. "Being-itself," on the other hand, is the pro-

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per concern of the theologian; for by "being-itself" Tillich means "God"--not, to be sure, "God" as a being, but as the ground and power of being. Being-itself is neither identical with, nor subject to, the structure of being, but is the ground of that structure.[1] Nevertheless, Tillich insists that "being-itself" is a philosophical concept.[2] But, on the basis of his own distinction between "structure of being" and "being-itself" it is not really clear why this should be so.

A reason for Tillich's wish to consider "being-itself" a philosophical concept, no doubt, is the fact that "being-itself" represents for him what, to use Alston's phrase, is "ontologically ultimate." But the philosopher as philosopher, in Tillich's view, cannot answer the question of "being-itself." "Being-itself," therefore, represents the point at which the philosopher's resources reach an end; as such, it would seem to be not so much a philosophical concept as a sign for philosophy that it has arrived at the end of its road and must, if it wishes to go on, travel the road of theology. Randall has pointed out, for example, that "being-itself" is "a concept at which ontological analysis can never arrive. Ontology can find only the 'being' which is common to all particular and determinate beings. 'Being-itself,' in any other sense, seems to be a religious myth or symbol."[3] Randall's criticism of Tillich's view of "being-itself" as a philosophical concept is very interesting, because the line he draws between the "being" of ontological analysis and "being-itself" is very

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[1] S.T. I, pp. 235-239.

[2] Ibid., p. 230; "Reply to Interpretation and Criticism," p. 235.

[3] "The Ontology of Paul Tillich," op. cit., p. 161.

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much in conformity with Tillich's distinction between "structure of being" and "being-itself." But the extent to which Tillich tends to obliterate this distinction is indicated clearly in his reply to Randall. He says: "But is 'being-itself' symbolic, and therefore theological and not philosophical? I do not think so, because I believe that every philosophy has an implicit or explicit answer to the question: What does the word 'is' mean?"[1] Elsewhere, however, Tillich says that it is the philosopher's analysis of the "structure of being" which provides the answer to the question as to what "is" means, or what it means "to be."[2] "Being-itself" is not what the philosopher analyzes, but that which, according to Tillich, gives philosophy a religious motive. It is the philosopher's human concern about his relation to being-itself which, presumably, prompts him to philosophize.

It is not clear, moreover, why the religious concern with being-itself prompts some men to attempt to describe the structure of being. Not only are the structure of being and being-itself not identical, that is, but it is not even obvious how precisely they are related. Why should a concern with being-itself take on the peculiar form which it does in philosophy? Thus, we are brought back, I think, to the point made in the previous section of this chapter. One can assume that there is a relationship between philosophy and "being-itself" only to the extent that it is also assumed that philosophy is

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[1] "Reply to Interpretation and Criticism," p. 335.

[2] S.T. I, p. 18; Biblical Religion, pp. 5-8; Love, Power, and Justice, pp. 19, 23.

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theonomous.[1] But that there is a relationship between the two in general remains at best, I think, highly questionable.

Philosophical Questions and Theological Answers

In the pursuit of his task, the philosopher is led to ask questions which he cannot, as a philosopher, answer. The philosopher in this predicament must either become a theologian himself or turn to the theologian for his answers. The philosopher is driven to ask these important questions, and finally, the ultimate question of being-itself, by the theological or existential element in his philosophy.[2] It should be noted, however, that the questions which the philosopher cannot answer are not, as such, philosophical questions; they do not, that is, concern the ontological analysis of the structure of being. The questions which the philosopher cannot answer are provided by the religious-theological, or existential, element in his philosophy or personal vision of life. To the extent that Tillich gives the impression that theology answers the unanswerable questions of philosophy, his view is misleading. The questions which theology answers are "existential" questions, and thus, by definition, religious. In the degree to which any philosophy lacks such an existential substance, it provides no questions for theology to answer.

Philosophers may nevertheless object to Tillich's view that they

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[1] That Tillich is to some extent aware of this is evident, as when he says: "The mutual immanence of theology and philosophy, though never perfect, is a partially fulfilled eschatology. It is, in my own terminology, a state of theonomy." ("Reply to Interpretation and Criticism," p. 336.)

[2] Biblical Religion, p. 19; S.T. I, p. 25; "Philosophy and Theology," pp. 87-89.

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cannot as philosophers answer these existential questions. They can point to innumerable examples of philosophers who have attempted to give philosophical answers to the question of God and to questions concerning the meaning of life. But to such objections Tillich always has a ready answer, an answer provided by his definitional distinction between philosophy and theology. His answer is that to the extent that philosophers answer such questions they have become theologians. Or, he may also say that philosophers can answer existential questions insofar as their philosophy is theonomous.[1]

That the questions which theology answers are not philosophical questions is also evident from a consideration of Tillich's notion of the mutual interdependence of questions and answers within the method of correlation. When the theologian uses philosophy for the material out of which he formulates the existential question, what he looks for and analyzes is not the formal element of philosophy, but its existential or religious element. The theologian selects material from philosophy, art, psychology, and so forth, insofar as it "reflects man's existential predicament."[2] If a philosophy fails to reflect this predicament, it is of no use to the theologian. Moreover, the form of the existential question is determined by the theological system and the answers which it gives; the substance of the answers is the Christian message; and the form of the answer must depend on the form of the question. The form of the question, however, has already been determined by the theological system and its answers.[3] What all this comes down to is that theological answers are answers

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[1] "Reply to Interpretation and Criticism," p. 337; S.T. I, p. 25.

[2] S.T. II, p. 15.

[3] Ibid.

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to questions which are from the beginning religious and not philosophical questions.[1] Insofar as philosophy has a religious substance it is useful to the theologian in that it provides him with material in terms of which he may attempt to relate the answers of theology to the human situation.

In all of this, it is evident that the theologian never leaves the theological circle; for both the existential questions and the theological answers "are within the sphere of the religious commitment."[2] And, this, Tillich believes, is as it should be; for the theologian may not leave the theological circle. But the question inevitably arises whether it is not necessary at some point for the theologian to step outside of his circle--if he wishes, that is, to be an apologetic theologian--in order to make contact with those outside of the circle. Can there be a relationship between philosophy and theology without a point of contact outside of the theological circle? Tillich, I believe, thinks there can be such a relationship, and his belief is grounded in the assumption that there can be no conflict between the universal logos and the particular logos, that is, between philosophical reason and the Christian faith. But the history of Western culture testifies that such conflict is possible, and, one is tempted to add, inevitable. I would agree with Tillich's view that there can be no conflict between philosophical and theological truth, in the final analysis; but this is so, to use Tillich's own terms, only

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[1] This follows, moreover, not from any necessary division between the philosophical and the religious, but from Tillich's own definitional distinction between philosophy and theology.

[2] S.T. II, pp. 14-15.

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in the state of "essence" and not under the conditions of "existence." So long as both the philosopher and the theologian have but a fragmentary grasp of truth, conflicts between them will inevitably arise. And insofar as philosophy fails to be theonomous, it seems to me, Tillich's conception of their relationship is inadequate.

Tillich's conception of the relation between philosophy and theology, and his method of correlation, would have been more adequate and more convincing, it seems to me, if he had allowed that the form of the question be determined by the situation rather than by the theological system. His method of correlation would then be taking a greater risk, theologically, but its effectiveness might also be enhanced. Tillich should have allowed philosophy to establish the form of the questions, and, thus, also the form of the answers. This would, of course, make it more difficult for the theologian to answer these questions; but to the extent that he succeeded, his answers could claim, more convincingly than they can now, to be answers to genuine philosophical questions. As Tillich's method has been presented, however, the theologian not only answers existential questions, but also determines for the most part what these questions are. As a result, it is relatively easy for the theologian to answer existential questions. But the philosopher may justly protest that these questions are not the ones he is asking. The theologian may then retort that the philosopher is asking the wrong questions; such a reply, however, appears to me to be questionable, at least from an apologetic point of view.

Another difficulty in Tillich's conception of the relation between philosophy and theology, I think, is his rather narrow conception

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of philosophy. I do not wish to dispute Tillich's right to choose his own conception of philosophy, even if that conception differs from those currently in vogue among philosophers. But he has hurt his own cause, it seems to me, by not taking more seriously some of the contemporary forms of philosophic thought, especially those generally called "analytic" philosophy. In so doing, he has failed to address many contemporary philosophers in their situation, and thus, on his own terms, has failed to be sufficiently apologetic. Had Tillich taken analytic philosophy more seriously, it could have had a clarifying impact on both his philosophy and his theology, and could have given his work, so rich in content, a more disciplined philosophical form.

Concluding Comments

One of the main difficulties involved in Tillich's conception of the relation between philosophy and theology is that philosophy and theology are not sufficiently distinguished. The distinction made can only be maintained by the somewhat artificial device of definition. Moreover, several flaws in Tillich's argument result from his failure to attend with sufficient care to his own definitional distinction between philosophy and theology. Another objection which may be raised against Tillich's theory is that he has not convincingly demonstrated that philosophy always has a religious content. Even granting his assumption that everyone has an ultimate concern, his argument fails in this instance partially because of the limited conception of philosophy on which he depends, but also because of his dubious (and, seemingly unconscious) assumption that ultimate concern

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is always concern about what is ultimate. Further, his conception of the form-content relation, which provides the foundation for the philosophy-theology relation, is provocative but is not always illustrated with sufficient clarity. One may wonder, for example, whether the religious substance which Tillich sees in his theological analyses of works of philosophy and art is really there, or whether he does not, on occasion, put it there himself. Moreover, to the extent in which Tillich's conception of the philosophy-theology relation depends upon the presence of a religious substance in philosophy, and hence upon his concept "theonomy," it makes no advance beyond his earlier conception of this relation, and would seem to share its inadequacies.

In spite of the inadequacies of Tillich's conception, however, it is not without merit. While inadequate as a general theory, the conception of the philosophy-theology relation is partially valid. Theologians do employ philosophical concepts and philosophers often bring their religious convictions (positively and negatively) into their work. The notion that the source of philosophy is reason alone is, of course, only a myth; and only the thoroughly naive or totally blinded could put any credence in it. Tillich's use of the form-content relation in his analysis of the religious substance of philosophical notions, therefore, is most illuminating. The fault does not lie in Tillich's use of that relation as such, but in his generalization of it. For it is doubtful that all philosophy expresses such a content. And the notion that philosophy does contain a religious substance, if universalized, becomes an empty tautology.

Tillich's insistence that religion cannot be reduced to any one of the functions of the human spirit, but is a function of man's whole personality exhibited in all spheres, is also certainly valid. It is, moreover, a significant contribution to the philosophy of religion which, in recent times, has shown the tendency to reduce religion to aesthetic feeling or to moral behavior. The significance of this contribution is reduced, however, by Tillich's tendency to leave the positive side of his conception of religion vague. This vagueness is due in large measure to the fact that he ontologizes the concept of God, interpreting it as the "unconditioned" and "being-itself." But if it is not clear, as some philosophers believe, how man can be conceived to relate himself to the God of traditional Christianity, it is even less clear how man can relate himself religiously to the unconditioned and being-itself.

Tillich's attempt to relate philosophy and theology, some may wish to say, is just another futile effort to reconcile the irreconcilable. If it is true that Tillich has not achieved his goal, his philosophical theology remains, nevertheless, as a challenge to both philosophers and theologians. It stands as a challenge to philosophers to devote themselves to serious problems and not to allow themselves to become wholly absorbed in the formal side of philosophy. And it provides a necessary thorn in the flesh for those theologians who would prefer to isolate themselves from the questions of philosophy and the problems of culture.

The question naturally arises, concerning the work of anyone who attempts to relate philosophy and theology, whether the final product is philosophy or whether it is theology. This is a very difficult question to answer in regard to Tillich. In theory at least, Tillich tends to subordinate philosophy to theology; for theology is given

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the privilege of formulating, as well as answering, the existential questions of his system. But Tillich's formulations of these questions and answers reflects the influence of philosophy as much as, if not more than, theology. He depends, it often seems, much more on his philosophical sources--idealism and existentialism--than he does on the traditional sources of theology. Nevertheless, his intention is to be a theologian, and everything he says has a theological character and reflects his religious commitment to Christianity even though he reinterprets its traditional doctrines rather freely. The difficulty attached to assigning Tillich's work to either field is evidenced by the fact that his critics are not agreed as to whether his work belongs to philosophy or to theology. Philosophers are apt to call it theology, and theologians frequently complain that it is dominated by his ontology. It is impossible, it seems to me, to answer the question either way. Tillich merges philosophy and theology so thoroughly that the best one can do is to use his own phrase "philosophical theology" to describe his work.

If Tillich's theory of the relation between philosophy and theology fails to be completely adequate, it remains, nevertheless, the most provocative attempt which our generation has seen. And his work is filled with individual insights, philosophical and theological, which should serve as a source of inspiration to both philosophers and theologians for many years to come.

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